COVERT FROM THE STORM:

OR,

The Fearful encouraged in Times of SUFFERING;

FROM

Rev. 2. 10. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tryed, & ye shall have tribulation ten dayes; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of life.*

By *Nathanael Vincent*, a Preacher and Prisoner of Jesus Christ, and written during his close confinement, when few could come at him but his God, who yet abundantly made up the want of other company.

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THE MAGI

To *Him* that is Higher than the *Higheſt*, and will ſhortly come to *judge* the world in *righteouſneſs*.

Moſt Mighty Lord!

A *Priſoner approaches to thy footſtool, and not without ſome confidence, becauſe he is confinednot for evil doing but for well doing. That which men account his crime, thou haſt made his duty, and by doing this he hath incurred their diſpleaſure, but he hopes he hath avoyded thine. He was willing to caſt the Net over a great many, that the more might be taken, and by being taken, ſet indeed at liberty. He was deſirous that the Subjects of thy Kingdome might be multiplyed therefore he ſpake to ſuch great multitudes, and he verily thinks however men may cenſure it, thou doſt not call it Raſhneſs, or Zeal not according to knowledge.*

Since thou haſt commanded thy Meſſengers to go into the High-wayes, and as many as they find to bid to the Marriage: *Since thou layeſt an injunction upon them*, to preach the Goſpel to every creature, *ſurely thou never didſt intend* their compaſſion and care

should be confined to a very few: *Oh therefore that every* Five *of them that hear thy voyce and follow thee might be increased* unto so many thousands! *Thin Congregations are a lamentable sight*: Let them therefore fly as a Cloud, and as Doves to their windows.

Incline the hearts of Magistrates to pity and moderation; let their Sword be drawn only against those that are Malefactors truly so called, not against such as would fain be at work for thee, and turning many unto righteousness: Convince them that 'twill be the design and desire of a godly Ministry, to make their Hearers better Subjects to their earthly Rulers, as well as to the King of Saints.

Thy Prisoner who is in this Gate-house *during thy will and pleasure, earnestly Petitions for his liberty. He deserves to be laid aside, but desires to be used: he would fain have the Prison Dore open to let* him out, *but is a great deal more earnest to have the Pulpit dore open to let* him in, *that he might again be preaching of thy Gospel. He longs to be warning the secure, who see not the Sword drawn out against them; to be stopping the madmen who are making such hast to eternal destruction; to be inviting the miserable to mercy, & the lost unto a Saviour.* Where is thy zeal & thy strength, O Lord, and the sounding of thy

Bowels

Bowels, and thy mercies! are they restrained? *Oh pity immortal Souls that are going to Hell by Droves; and in some places, the Pastours are so far from hindring, that being exemplary for looseness and impiety, they go before them to perdition.*

Thy Prisoner blesses thee that ever he had the honour to be in bonds for thee. The worst of thee, even thy Cross is not at all to be disliked. The enlargments of his heart have been greater, then when he was at liberty; his peace hath been more perfect: Thy presence is so sweet, that he would go to any place to have more of it. Thou hast given in that grace which is glory begun: he confidently believes this Gaol will make him more meet for the glorious liberty of thy Children; and that he shall praise thee for ever for what he hath endured.

Thy Servant can say it with boldness before thee, that he honours the Authority thou hast set over him; he hath put others in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to be ready to every good work; *and remembers it is his own duty to be thus subject. Only he hath preached contrary to the Magistrates Command, because thy Command is so express for preaching; and thou pressest it upon Pastours*, as they love thee to feed thy Lambs, to feed thy Sheep.

Oh thou dreadful and heart-searching Judge! cause the integrity of thy Nonconforming Servants to shine so bright, as to break through all unreasonable prejudices! Let their righteousness be brought forth as the Light, and their judgment as the Noon day; *that that severity may be at length ashamed of it self that's used towards them. Oh hasten hasten thy second appearing, that the secrets of hearts may be discovered, and that it may be made manifest before men and Angels, who have worshiped thee the rightest way; who most have sought thee, and least themselves.*

Thy Servant being taken off from preaching, was willing to be some way beneficial to thy Church; therefore his Pen hath been going when his tongue could not. And if souls are edified and encouraged, if thy Kingdome and Name and Glory be any way by this Writing advanced, then the higheſt end will be attained, which is aimed at by him, who is not, who would not be his own, but by millions of Obligations is engaged to be

Thine Eternally,

Nathanael Vincent.

TO THE READERS,

Especially those that were wont to be his Hearers.

Readers:

NEed *Arguments be used with the tost in a tempest to put into an Haven? or with the pursued by the avenger to fly to a Sanctuary? Their danger is the best Rhetorick to perswade them to that which is for their own security. And if your danger were more deeply and rightly apprehended, you would hasten to the Lord, whose Name is a strong Tower, and who hath promised to be* an hiding place from the wind, a covert from the Tempest, as Rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land, *Isa.* 32. 2.

The Devil hath great wrath because he knows he hath but a short time: We in this latter age of the World must expect more furious assaults from him, because the day of Judgment, unto which he is reserved, is hastning. His instruments are enraged, and drive on furiously. But what is all their force and power, to the

strength

ſtrength of that Almighty Lord, who if you leave to him, and truſt in him, hath covenanted to uphold you? How inconſiderable is their anger, when your believing thoughts have dwelt a little upon his kindneſs and compaſſion?

Be not affrighted at the Croſs of Chriſt, 'twill, when felt and ſweetned, be found no more a burthen to you, than wings are to the Bird flying in the air, or Sails to the Ship cutting through the Sea; 'twill be a means to mend your pace, and make you run ſwifter in your Race towards the Prize of the high Calling of God. If your Lord had not known the eaſineſs and uſefulneſs of his yoak, he would never have required you to have taken it upon you.

I have Preached much to your incouragement: Now I am taken off, a ſad ſilence is impoſed on me: Only my mouth is ſtill open to the Lord for you, that you may ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God. *I could not have ſatisfied either you or my ſelf, unleſs in this my reſtraint and retirement, I had written ſomthing that might be a furtherance to your faith & joy in this hour of temptation. The bleſſing of the Father of Spirits go along with this Book! Oh that believers*

may

may be ſtrengthened and refreſhed by it! And if enemies read it with an ill mind, the Author wiſheth that by reading it their minds may be changed, and for their own ſakes as well as his made better.

Nathanael Vincent.

ERRATA.

ERRATA.

Before you read I pray correct theſe faults, elſe the ſenſe will be quite ſpoyled in ſome places.

PAge 37. Line 12. for *conſeſs* read *profeſs*. Page 43. line 14. for *preſervation* read *preſervative*. Page 47. line 18. for *doth uphold* read *do uphold*. Page 53. line 15. for *offences* read *offenders*. Line 16. of the ſame page for *heartily* read *preſently*. Line 17. for *very* read *many*. Line 18. for *even* read *ſeven*. Page 77. line 10. for *Goal houſe* read *Gatehouſe*. Page 88. line 9. for *ever* read *even*. Page 100. line 21. for *τω μιχθη* read *μιχθήτω*, Page 104. line 23. for *religious enemies* read *enemies of Religion*. Page 107. line 3. for *expreſſive* read *expreſs*. Page 108. l 16. for *ſhal* read *ſhould*. Page 109. line 1. for *their* read *this*. Page 113. line 3. for *loved* read *beſtowed*. Page 119. line 12. blot out *upon you*. Page 120. line 5. for *but* read *beſt*. Page 121. line 27. for *fear of God is ſeen* read *face of God is ſeen*. Page 123. line 27. for *communion* read *coniunction*. Page 124 line 6. for *fall* read *fel*. Line 16. of the ſame Page, for *filled* read *killed*. Page 125. line 8. for *unſpeakable* read *uncapable*. Line 22. of the ſame Page, for *attended* read *attained*. Line 24. for *mouths are ſongs* read *mouths are full of ſongs*.

A COVERT FROM THE STORM.

Rev. 2. 10.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tryed, and ye shall have tribulation ten dayes; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of life.

A Light is hung up at the porch of this Book, which is so very mysterious: the three first Chapters are more easy to be understood than those that fol-

follow: Here the waters of the Sanctuary are but up to the head, but preſently they grow ſo deep, as that the talleſt muſt be fain to ſwim. I am perſwaded that one reaſon why the Holy Ghoſt ſpeakes ſo ſublimely, is, that man when he reads may ſometimes lay aſide the book, and cry, Ω βάθος, O the depth! and being the more humbly ſenſible of his own ignoranee and weakneſſes, may pray with the greater earneſtneſs, that the Spirit who was the *Inſpirer* would alſo be the *Interpreter* of the Revelation.

Seven Epiſtles, or Letters, dated from Heaven, indited by the Son of God, are ſent to the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*: He who knew their works, owns what is right, taxes what was amiſs, and calls to repentance and amendmenr, and charges them to hold faſt thoſe good things which they had received, as being a treaſure highly worth the keeping. The Captain of th eir ſalvation encourages to quit themſelves like men, that overcoming they might in the end be crown'd.

The Text I have choſen lyes in the Epiſtle ſent to the Church in *Smyrna*. Poor they were in the World, and yet rich towards God; and it is not unlikely that for the

the ſecuring of their ſpiritual riches; as to worldly things they had been impoveriſhed. Chriſt knew their works, and as their works, ſo likewiſe their tribulation; he knew alſo how to ſupport them under the heavieſt and moſt preſſing burthens, nay, to render all their troubles advantagious, by conducing to their more perfect purity and peace; and therefore bids them in no wiſe to be afraid, *Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer*, &c. Our Lord came to deliver, not only from the ſting of Death, and from the curſe of the Croſs and affliction, but from the fear of both.

The words may be analyſed or reſolved into three parts.

Firſt, Here's a general encouragment againſt all kinds of ſuffering. *Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer.*

Secondly, Among other ſufferings impriſonment is ſpecified and foretold, where take notice 1. who is the procuring cauſe of impriſonment, and he is the *Devil*. 2. The perſons impriſoned, *Some of you*. All the Saints ſhall not be in bonds together. 3. The end of their impriſonment, which their God aims at in permitting it; 'tis *that they may be tryed*. 4. Although they have tribulation it ſhall not be long-

liv'd

liv'd, *it ſhall laſt but ten dayes*, that is a very ſhort ſeaſon.

Thirdly, We have a ſtrict charge given, *Be thou faithful*, and that even to *the death*: Perſeverance muſt run parallel with our lives.

Fourthly, A ſure and glorious promiſe, perſwading to this faithfulneſs and enduring to the end; *I will give thee a Crown of life*. Here's a *Crown*, a word that carries great dignity and advancement: This *Crown is a Crown of life*, or, a *living Crown*. The Garland that's put upon the heads of triumphant Saints will never wither, their Crown will never fade, there will be no death to throw it off again when once they have received it. This Crown ſhall be given; to ſhew that what they do, or can do, bears no proportion to ſuch a reward: Neither their active nor paſſive obedience is meritorious. Grace, Grace, muſt be written round the Crown of glory, becauſe freely beſtowed. *I will give* this Crown ſayes Chriſt: I who have purchaſed it by my death, who have it in my keeping, who am the Lord of glory, and alive for evermore.

The text is very fruitful, and affords ſeveral very excellent and uſeful points of Do-

Doctrine. I shall raise these nine, which flow naturally from the words, and insist upon them all.

The first Doctrine is this, *He that will be a Saint, shall be a sufferer.*

The second this, *No sufferings should cause the Saints to be afraid,*

The third this, *Among other troubles, some Believers endure bonds and imprisonment.*

The Fourth this, *The Devil is the imprisoner of Believers.*

The Fifth this, *That Saints are imprisoned, that they may be tryed.*

The Sixth this, *The Tribulation of Believers will not last always, after ten dayes, that is a short time, a period will be put to it.*

The Seventh Doctrine is this, *Whatsoever sufferings a Christian is exposed to, he must be faithful.*

The Eighth this, *A Christians faithfulnesse must run parallel with his life, to the very death he must be stedfast.*

The Ninth and last is this, *Upon those who continue faithful to the death, Christ will certainly bestow a Crown of life and immortality.*

The First Doctrine:

He that will be a Saint shall be a sufferer.

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The Spirit ſpeaks hardly any thing more expreſſely then he doth this truth. The Apoſtle tells what afflictions and perſecutions he met with, and peremptorily affirms, that none ſhall eſcape. Perſecution they ſhall meet with, if not in one kind, in another. Drops ſhall fall upon every Saint, though ſome may be wet with greater ſhowers, 2 Tim. 3. 10, 11, 12. *But thou haſt fully known my Doctrine, manner of life, purpoſe, faith, long-ſuffering, charity, patience, perſecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at* Antioch, *at* Janium, *at* Lyſtra, *what perſecutions I endured there: But out of them all the Lord delivered me: yea and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution.* Conſult alſo, Act. 14. 22. *Confirming the ſouls of the Diſciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and we muſt through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.* The journies end is glorious, but the way through that leads to it, it lies through many tribulations. Self-denial and the Croſs are doctrines which Chriſt preached to all his followers, Luk. 9. 23. *And he ſaid unto them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me.*

Two things are here to be inquired into. One is, *whence the ſufferings of the Saints ariſe?* The other, *What is the reaſon of this diſpenſation?* Or, *Why the Lord ſuffers thoſe he loves, to be thus exerciſed?*

Firſt, *Whence the ſufferings of the Saints ariſe?* They are both *from the god of this world*, and *from the world it ſelf*. Earth and Hell do both combine to trouble the heirs of Heaven, as they are going to their inheritance.

1. The Saints ſufferings ariſe *from the god of this world*: So Satan in Scripture is called. He commands the generality of the world, who are at his ſervice, and are lead by him at his pleaſure: and thoſe whom he cannot rule, he is reſolved, what he can, to moleſt and diſquiet. The Devil began betimes; righteous *Abel* did feel the effects of his enmity and hatred; and he continues this perſecuting Trade unto this very hour. And till the whole Body of Chriſt be taken up where the Head is, Satan will be as a thorn, to pierce and trouble them.

It will not be amiſs to examine the matter further; and to ſearch into the cauſe, why Satan thus endeavours to load the Saints with ſufferings.

1. *The Devil bears an implacable hatred to*

the Saints Head, the Lord Jesus. He would fain have killed Christ from the birth; and incited *Herod, to make such weeping and lamentation in Rama*, because of the children that were so inhumanly butchered, *Mat. 2. Our Lord was tempted by the Devil*, Mat. 4. who would gladly have foiled the Second, as he had done the First *Adam*; but he could not prevail. *The Devil is said to have put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ.* All which plainly shews his hatred of the Son of God. The works of Christ and of Satan, are quite contrary. Satans work is to murther and destroy; therefore he hath his name *Apollyon*, Rev. 9. 11. But Christs work is to save. The Son of God was manifested to this very end, that he might destroy the works of this Destroyer; and the Son of God hath got the Victory, *He hath spoyled Principalities and Powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his Cross*, Col. 2. 15. He is now ascended on high, and is at his Fathers right hand: And the old Dragon being full of wrath, to see him so exalted, spits his venom at the Members, which are in his reach, for the Heads sake. And surely our Lord will look upon himself as the more obliged to stand by his suffering servants, since 'tis for his sake partly, that this adversary is

so

so liberal of his arrowes, and shoots so many at them.

2. *The Devil is full of envy at Believers themselves.* Assoon as ever he had sinned; presently the chains of darkness were clapt upon him; he was immediately cast down to hell, no patience being shewn, no pity extended, no means of recovery offer'd, 2 Pet. 2. *God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains and darkness to be reserved unto judgment.* But believers, though by nature the children of wrath and disobedience, are pitied, pardoned, adopted, saved: A Remedy is provided, and that Remedy made effectual, through the application of it, to their recovery, and the recovery of their lost blessedness. Now this fills Satan with envy, which is both his sin and torture; and envy stirs him up to do what mischief he is able.

3. *The Devil dislikes holiness where-ever he finds it.* He hates indeed all the children of men; but those that are sanctified and renewed, in a special manner. As he is utterly destitute of, so he utterly detests and abhors the image of God, which shews the fearful depravation of his nature. 'Tis no wonder he runs to the utmost length of his chain to harm the Saints, *who have*

put off the old, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, Eph. 4. 24. Sin is arrived at its full growth, 'tis come to its perfection in the Devil. Holineſs he ſtrikes at, and endeavours to diſcourage and hinder where-ever he finds it. Thoſe who reſemble Satan in this, the meaſure of their iniquity is fuller than they are aware of.

4. *The Devil deſigns by the perſecuting of the Saints, to promote his intereſt and Kingdom.* This Prince of darkneſs is a very proud ſpirit, he would, by his good will, have the whole world his ſlaves and vaſſals. How does he rage, when any of them, whom he lead captive, are reſcued from him! He is ſedulous to eſtabliſh his Throne and Principality. Oh that Saints were as zealous and diligent to advance the honour and intereſt of the King of Saints! The Devil hopes to promote his Kingdom, not only by flattering ſinners into his ſubjection, but alſo by affrighting them from the ſervice of another Lord.

There are theſe five wayes whereby Satan is like to be advantaged in times of ſuffering.

1. He is likely to get advantage, *by diſcouraging the weak in faith.* He hopes that they who have but weak hands, and feeble knees

knees, will not eaſily get over thoſe ſtumbling blocks, which in times of trouble are caſt in their way. And if their hearts do faint and fail, not only they themſelves, but Religion looſes ground; and what ground is loſt, the Devil gains. He ſet upon *Peter* when he was weak; and how far did he prevail? *Peter* falls moſt ſhamefully, and his fall coſt him dear; and how was the prejudice againſt Chriſt in the High-Prieſts Hall encreaſed, when one of his followers, thus with curſing and ſwearing, did ſo utterly deny him? Satan deſires to have weak Saints eſpecially, that he *may ſift them as wheat*: 'Tis well our Lord prayes for them, *that their faith may not fail* in the hour of temptation.

2. Satan is likely to get advantage, *by making the Temporaries fall away*. He knows that the Sun of perſecution ſhining hot, will ſcorch the Seed that's ſown, and ſprings up in ſtony ground, *Mat.* 13. 21. Temporary believers are quickly offended at Chriſt, and become unbelievers again. If a ſtorm ariſes, they will leave the Ship where Chriſt is, and loving carnal eaſe, and an whole skin, will put in to the next harbour. Let Chriſt be alone, if he will, in a tempeſt, they will not then accompany him. And when many of theſe un-

found Diſciples do forſake the Lord, carnal hearts are more confirmed and hardned againſt him; as if 'twere unſafe, and conſequently a very unwiſe part to be of the number of his followers. The going away of temporary believers, is very likely to hinder others from engaging to ſuch a Maſter who is ſo much deſerted.

3. Satan is likely to get advantage in the times of ſuffering, *by ſtaving off them that are without, from coming in, and cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus.* When any begin to bethink themſelves, to conſider their wayes, and to mind ſalvation, the Devil, eſpecially in the day of calamity, fills their minds with ſuch ſuggeſtions as theſe: That the Croſs of Chriſt is heavy; that 'tis dreadful to be hated of all men; that tribulation will pinch their fleſh; that name, relations, credit, eſtate, nay and perhaps life may be called for, as ſoon as ever Chriſt is cloſed with. And hereby he ſtrangely and ſtrongly prevails upon timerous and corrupted nature. *You had better*, ſayes Satan, *underſtand when you are well, and keep your ſelves ſo; you had better live in peace and plenty, as the moſt of thoſe about you do, than be ſingular in your way, and by that ſingularity make ſo many enemies, and pull down upon your heads ſo many troubles.* And truly the fleſh hath an open

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ear to such counsel, though it be very unreasonable and pernicious.

4. Satan is likely to get advantage in the time of sufferings, *By lessening the Saints number.* He cares not how many of these are cut off; he delights in the high and crying sin of those who be the Saints Destroyers; and he knows that when believers are cut off, though he cannot trouble *them*, they cannot trouble *him* any longer, by undermining of his Kingdom, as before they did. Saints, whose faith, and love, and hope, set them above the fear of sufferings, are persons whom the Devil fears, as well as hates; therefore he wishes he were well rid of them: these will hearten and *strengthen their brethren* to stand fast in the Lord; these consequently are the marks at which he aims, and would fain quite run them down to the very grave by tribulation.

5. Satan is likely to get advantage in the time of suffering, *by hindring the preaching and progress of the Gospel.* Where persecution is vehement, Vision grows rare; in those places where the joyful sound, the glad tydings of peace, used to be heard, there is a sad silence. The Prophets are driven into corners, and not suffered to cry aloud to sinners to awaken them, *and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of*

Satan unto God. And when faithful Labourers are thrown aside, Satan expects a plentiful harvest.

Thus the Devil aims at the promoting of his Kingdom, by striking at the Saints: But the Lord commonly at last out-shoots him in his own bow, and makes these sufferings tend to the sufferers good, and the Gospels glory and encrease. God can accomplish his ends by means that seem contrary; he can make Satan and persecutors serve his Son by enlarging of his Borders, which they thought and hoped to have narrowed. He can *thrust forth* (so the word in the original ἐκβάλῃ signifies) Labourers into his Harvest again. And though men and Devils stand to hinder their entrance and working, if the Lord *thrust them in*, in they shall go, and work with more power and success then ever.

2. The Saints sufferings arise, as from the god of this world, *so from the world it self.* What Christ said concerning the Jewes who went about to kill him, may be applied to those who are the troublers of his Members, *They are of their father the Devil, and the lusts of their father they will do*, John 8. 44. He is a *Lyar and a Murtherer*, and so are they. They first raise lyes of Believers, confidently affirming them to

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be rebellious, ſeditious enemies to Kingdomes (though indeed the Pillars of the Nations where they live) and having lyed againſt them, they endeavour their ruine; having miſrepreſented them, they fall upon them: They lye in ſaying, the Saints are not fit to live, and then they ſtrive to root them out of the Land of the living. Thus they make nothing of tranſgreſſing at once both the ſixth and the ninth Commandment.

Now the reaſon which moves the men of this world to trouble the Saints of God is fourfold.

1. *The Saints are not of the world.* Our Lord ſpeaks thus to his Diſciples, *Joh.* 15. 19. *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* Again, he ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, *John* 17. 14. *I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them,* the reaſon is, *becauſe they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* Believers are unlike the men of the world, and this *unlikeneſs* is the ground of *diſlike*. They dare not be careleſs of their ſouls, fearleſs of God, prodigal of the day of Grace, as the world are. *They are not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their minds, and*

they

they prove what is the good, the acceptable and perfect will of God, Rom. 12. 2. And truly the world is a great enemy to all them that are *Non-Conformists* to its manners, although its manners are so exceeding vain and sinful.

2. *The Saints are of God.* And the men of the world, who are θεομάχοι, it is no wonder if they hate the Saints likewise. — *Visam fera sævit in umbram.* Some Beasts have such an antipathy to man, that they will run at his Picture where they see it. In like manner, the world cannot endure those who have the image of God resplendent and shining in them. *Abel was hated because his works were righteous*, 1 John 3: 12. Prodigiously strange! that believers should be abhorr'd, because beautified with grace, and be hated because lovely.

3. *The Saints are a conviction to the consciences of the ungodly.* 'Tis said that *Herod feared John the Baptist, because he was a just man and holy. Herods* conscience was struck with an aw, by the majesty and beauty that appeared in the conversation of that burning and shining light. The holiness of *John* made *Herods* wickedness the more apparent; and at last he makes an end of him who did so much disturb him in his filthy and unlawful pleasures. Wicked

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mens conſciences do, not unuſually, reproach them, becauſe they are ſo unlike believers. *Do you not ſee*, ſayes conſcience to them, *how watchful the Saints are leſt they enter into temptation? Do you not ſee how they pray, how they ſtrive, and how they live? Certainly you are in danger of the ſame Hell, which they endeavour to avoid; and capable of the ſame Kingdome, which they uſe ſuch violence to take:* And by ſuch language as this their falſe peace is intrencht upon; they cannot ſin with ſuch freedome and delight, but the ſecret and condemning whiſpers of conſcience, ſowr and leſſen their pleaſures: and this exceedingly raiſes their choler; and like ſo many wolves they fall upon the harmleſs ſheep of Chriſt which live among them.

4. *The Saints act contrary to the perverſe wills and inclinations of wicked ones.* They make conſcience of obeying that injunction, 1 *Pet.* 4. 2. *That he no longer live the reſt of his time in the fleſh, to the luſts of men, but to the will of God.* They are taught not to follow a multitude; and to judg that way unſafe and leading to ruine, which is the broadeſt, and moſt crowded with paſſengers. They dare not run with others to all excels of riot, and upon this ſcore they are ſpoken evil of. Two things make the

Saints

Saints to be maligned by the men of the world; *The Saints hate what the men of the world love*, and *vilifie what the men of the world adore*.

1. *They hate what the men of the world love.* Believers hatred of sin is universal, they strike at sin in themselves and others; they cannot with patience see such a cursed thing served by so many; they testifie of its evil and destructive nature, and hereby, though undeservedly, contract the ill will of them who prefer their sins before their souls, and will by no means let their lusts go, though these lusts of theirs are such sure hinderances to their eternal happiness.

2. *The Saints vilifie what the men of the World adore.* As the *Ephesians* of old stood up for their Goddess *Diana*, so the worldly minded cry out, *Great is the Mammon of unrighteousness*. But believers trample upon this idolized clay, they call it as it is, *Vanity and vexation of spirit*, and are not afraid to let the earthly minded know, that it had been better for them never to have come into the world at all, than to have nothing but the things of the world to be their portion.

You see now whence the sufferings of the Saints arise, from the world, and from the god of the World. In

In the ſecond place we are to enquire, wherefore it is that God permits the Saints who are ſo dear to him, to be thus exerciſed with ſufferings.

1. *Saints are exerciſed with ſufferings, that pride may be hid from them.* The ſin of pride cleaves cloſe, ſtands ſtiffly, is not eaſily pull'd down. A mighty hand is fain to be laid upon us, to keep our ſpirits low; and that mighty hand of God is a good hand, when, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *we humble our ſelves under it.* Sufferings make us often to reflect on ſin, and to be the more affected at our guilt and vileneſs. Our weakneſs *then* likewiſe becomes more apparent; we ſee how aſſuredly we ſhould ſink, if an arm from Heaven were not ſtretched forth to ſuſtain us. And when we ſee our vileneſs and our weakneſs, we ſhall not think our ſelves too good to ſuffer, we ſhall not through the haughtineſs of our hearts, fret and be impatient under our loads; thus to do, is unreaſonable, becauſe infinitely more than we feel hath been deſerved; and the way to force the Lord to withdraw, whoſe preſence is our ſtaffe and comfort. Sufferings being ſanctified, are hugely efficacious to our humiliation: bearing the yoke will tame our ſpirits, *and make us to put our mouthes in the duſt, if ſo be there may be hope*, Lam. 3. 29.

2. *Saints*

2. Saints are exercised with sufferings, *that they may be proved*. Their faith, and love, and other graces, which are much more precious than gold that perisheth, are tryed by the fire of afflictions, and abiding the fire, will be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. 'Tis a sign their grace is sincere indeed, if they follow the Lamb, though he leads them through fire and water; their faith is strong, or else it would fail; their love is ardent, else it would cool; they are the Lord Christs, not only by profession, but by a real incorporation and spiritual union, else tribulation would cause a separation. The Accuser of the brethren sayes perhaps to the Lord concerning believers, *Let men but touch what they have, let them be but exposed to suffering for thee, and they will presently deny thee.* But when they prove stedfast as a Rock in the midst of the most boysterous waves; when they will part with any thing rather than their integrity, their sincerity is hereby tryed and made manifest, and Satans accusation is evidently proved to be a false one.

3. Saints are exercised with sufferings, *in order to their refining*. Though they are not reprobate silver, yet much drosse notwithstanding is mixed with the right mettal;

tal; hence it follows that the furnace of tribulation is but needful. How do believers bestir themselvs to keep in with God, when the world frowns, and threatens and strikes at them? Oh then the folly of backsliding is very visible; how do they cry to have all those wide breaches that sin hath made, closed and made up again! how do their spirits make a diligent search after every thing that defiles, and which may prove a dark and uncomfortable cloud between the Lord and them: No lust but they are more than ordinary earnest to have it slain: And they profess persecution will be esteem'd a priviledge, if it conduce to more perfect purity; and that they will kiss the rod that drives sin and folly far away from them. As the promises of support, so the promises of sanctification are often pleaded, wherein, God engages *to cleanse them from all their filthiness, to save them from all their uncleannesses, to give them his spirit, and to cause them to walk in his statutes, and to observe his judgments, and do them*, Ezek. 36. 25, 26. The Saints in distress do hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the Lord doth by degrees satisfie that hunger: And the more they are freed from sin, their sufferings are the sweeter.

4. Saints

4. Saints are exerciſed with ſufferings, *that they may be weaned from things viſible.* Troubles are as ſo much gall put upon the worlds breaſts to wean us from it. In time of tribulation the Lord, not only by his word, but by his Providence, ſpeaks to us after this manner; *Ariſe, this is not your reſt, build not your neſt here, the whole Forreſt is ſold to Death, and every Tree muſt ſhortly down.* 'Tis in the time of peace uſually that the world inſinuates it ſelf; in trouble its emptineſs is more eaſily diſcerned. As *believers are crucifyed to the world, ſo the world is crucifyed unto them,* Gal. 6. 14. They behold the world as that which ſin hath brought a curſe upon, and therefore to be watch't againſt, leſt it prove a ſnare; and then they look upon the world with ſuch a kind of eye as the *Jewes* did upon Chriſt in his exinanition, *Iſa.* 53. *They ſee no form nor comlineſs in it, that they ſhould deſire it.* Believers in the evil day, beſide their hard uſage from the world, which makes them leſs to like it, have more affecting thoughts of eternity and the world to come: and hereupon the things which are temporal grow contemptible, and are not counted worth a look, 2 Cor. 4. 18. *Whilſt we look not at the thnigs which are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen*; and not without reaſon,

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for the things that are ſeen are temporal, but the things that are not ſeen are eternal.

5. Saints are exerciſed with ſufferings, *that they may be fitted for, and long for the inheritance that is above.* By ſufferings they are made conformable to their Head, and are perfected and ripened more and more for glory. Therefore afflictions are ſaid *to work for us a weight of glory.* Glory is promiſed to the ſufferer for righteouſneſs ſake; and *'tis a righteous thing with God, to give reſt to them who upon ſuch an account are troubled,* 2 Theſſ. 1. 7. By trouble they are made meet for reſt; and the greater the tribulation, the glory 'tis likely will be the greater, to be ſure the more welcome.

When we look round about us, and ſee nothing but matter of grief and ſorrow, 'twill make us look upward to thoſe manſions on high, and long to be there, where ſin and ſuffering will come to a perpetual end. In Heaven there will be an eternal calmneſs and ſerenity; no ſons of violence will be there to diſturb the Saints in their praiſes; no enemies will be permitted to roar in that Congregation; no fear of priſon or any other puniſhment will be there; but their joy will be like a full Sea, and

not ebb any more for ever. I am now come to the Application.

USE I.

If he that will be a Saint shall be a Sufferer, learn from hence, *They are far from being Saints, who resolve to give out when once it comes to suffering.* Those are not worthy the name of Disciples, who, like the Swallow, will tarry with Christ all the Summer, but when the cold and stormy Winter approaches, do use their wings and leave him. Our Lord sayes, *He that loves Father or Mother, or life it self, more than me, is not worthy of me:* that is, he is not fit to make one of my followers. If trouble make you to be offended, and go away from Christ, 'tis a sign you prefer ease and peace and prosperity before him, and consequently that you have not the faith unfeigned of Gods Elect. If you did *indeed believe, Christ would be precious*, and that even then, when he is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to others, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. If you did indeed believe, you would be of the Apostles mind, who counted all things but dung, when compared with Christ; and esteeming them but dung, no wonder

if

if he contentedly ſuffered the loſs of them; that his intereſt in his Lord might be ſecured, *Phil.* 3. 8. *For whom I have ſuffered the loſſe of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt.*

USE II.

If he that will be a Saint ſhall be a ſufferer, *then 'tis but reaſonable for every Saint to expect ſuffering.* Reckon upon it that troubles will be met with in your way to Heaven; none ever arrived to that κατὰ κράτος *fair Haven*, without being toſs'd by ſome tempeſts. He that goes to ſea, is not ſo fooliſh as to think it will be a perpetual calm all his Voyage. He that Liſts himſelf a Souldier, expects ſomtime or other to be engaged. So a Chriſtian ſhould ſit down, *and count the coſt*, Luke 14. before he embarque with Chriſt, before he liſt himſelf under this Captain of ſalvation. And certainly 'twill coſt ſome trouble to be Chriſts follower; none ever faithfully ſerved him, but his fleſh ſmarted for it; though it muſt alſo be affirmed, that this ſmart of the outward, is uſually ſweetned with a far greater pleaſure in the inner man. Our Lord ſpeaks to his Diſ-

ciples plainly, and without a Parable, *Joh. 16. ult. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation*; but that their hearts might not be troubled, he tells them firſt, *In me ye ſhall have peace*: And he adds ſecondly, *Be of good chear, I have overcome the world.*

USE III.

If he that will be a Saint ſhall be a ſufferer, *then 'tis the Saints wiſdome to prepare for ſufferings.* Evil dayes will come; but God hath provided armour of proof, which if you put on, you ſhall be able to withſtand in the evil day, and having done all to ſtand. I might here enlarge in going over the Chriſtians Armour: but I ſhall only ſingle out ſome pieces, which you muſt not fail to get and uſe in a day of ſuffering, and which, if uſed skilfully, no force, either of evil men, or evil Angels, ſhall prevail againſt you. Though no part of the Armour of God be needleſs, yet eſpecially you muſt take

The Shield of Faith.
The Breaſt-plate of Love.
The Helmet of Hope.

And cry by Prayer for continual help and ſupport from above.

1. That

2, That you may be arm'd againſt ſufferings, *take unto you the ſhield of Faith.* You are in a Battel, Men and Devils thruſting ſore at you that you may fall: What ſhift can you make without a Shield? The Shield is Armour to the other Armour. If Faith be ſtrong, your other Graces will have the greater vigour, and ſtand you in the greater ſtead. Faith will make you victorious. *This is the victory*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *that overcometh the world, even our Faith*, 1 John 5. 4. And it may truly be ſaid, This is alſo the victory that overcometh the god of this world, even our faith; faith prevails againſt both.

By faith the Worthies of old of whom the world was unworthy, went through all their tryals, and yet theſe tryals were very ſore: *They were cruelly mocked and ſcourged, they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword, they wandred about in ſheep-skins and goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented*, Heb. 11. 37. 'Tis remarkable, that the Holy Ghoſt in deſcribing their puniſhments, ſaith *they were tempted*. 'Tis likely fair means were uſed as well as foul, promiſes of preferment, as well as threatnings of torment, to draw them away from their

integrity; and this was a ſore temptation. But faith kept them ſtedfaſt, and rendred the temptation ineffectual.

Faith looks to its *Author and Finiſher* the Lord Jeſus, and ſees the world vanquiſhed by him, and the Principalities and Powers of darkneſs ſpoyled by him; and therefore concludes it will not be long ere more than a conqueſt through him that hath loved the believer will be obtained. And in the mean while Faith relyes upon the word of promiſe, and ſtayes the ſoul on the Lord Jehovah: whereupon the ſoul is both ſupported by an everlaſting arm, and alſo kept in perfect peace, *Iſa.* 26. 3, 4. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee. Truſt ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.*

2. That you may be armed againſt ſufferings, *get on the Breaſt-plate of love.* If you love much, you will conſent, when called, to ſuffer much, and not think much of what you ſuffer. If your love to the Lord Jeſus be, as it ought to be, tranſcendent and flaming, *many waters will not have power to quench it, all the floods that lift up their waves will not be able to drown it,* Cant. 8. 7.

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Let your love to Christ be surely grounded. Be well acquainted with your lost estate, your absolute need of this Saviour, without whom no shift can be made, but wrath and ruine are unavoidable. Be well acquainted with Christs matchless excellency, and how he is admirably, and every way suited to your desires and necessities, being a Prophet to instruct and reduce the ignorant and erring soul, a Priest to reconcile his Father to the guilty, a King to rescue and defend from all sorts, even the worst of enemies. And as he is *able*, so likewise *ready* to do all this, and that for *any* who desire that all this may be done for them. Indeed he rejects those who like only his *Priesthood*, but count his *Kingdome* an hard word, his commands grievous; but he never denyed his benefits to any that were willing to have them *all without exception*, purity as well as pardon and peace, grace as well as glory.

Our Lord is not unwilling you should take a view of him. He does not desire to be loved, unless, your eyes being enlightned, you see sufficient reason. Sin is loved upon a mistake; and 'tis upon a mistake that Christ is despised. If sin were understood, it would be abhorr'd: and if

Christs worth were but weigh'd and right-ly judg'd of, as he deserves to be, so he would be actually the *Desire of all Nations*, as the Prophet calls him, *Hag.* 2.7. Know him therefore, and let your love spring from a right understanding of him, and then nothing will be esteemed too good or dear to cast away, that you may hold him fast. The worlds store is nothing comparable to the benefits, which he hath purchased with the price of his blood. And the most severe Lawes and Edicts of men, the greatest torments that they can invent or inflict, are nothing near so dreadful as that *Anathema Maranatha*, which is thundred out against *any man that loves not the Lord Jesus*, 1 Cor. 16.22. *Anathema Maranatha*, signifies, *Let him be accursed till the Lord comes.* They that love not Christ, will have a curse lying upon them that never shall be removed, and that's infinitely worse than any present sufferings.

3. That you may be armed against sufferings, *Let not the Helmet of hope be wanting.* Your heads may be lifted up with boldness when you have this Helmet on. A lively hope will have a great influence to keep your hearts from sinking into de-

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ſpondency. *Hope is ſtiled the anchor of the ſoul both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and entring within the vail*, Heb. 6. 19. In the ſtorm of trouble believers ſhould caſt anchor, and their anchour muſt be caſt upward; there's the Rock of Ages, and in him their anchor is to be faſtned. The Ship ſails not while the anchor is caſt. But a Chriſtian differs, his anchor is faſtned, and yet he ſails at the ſame time; which ſhewes that he ſails moſt ſafely in the midſt of the greateſt fluctuations, towards the Harbour of peace. Let Hope be ſtrong. Hope of a happy concluſion will make preſent affliction be endured with patience.

It is the buſineſs of Hope to wait for and expect the accompliſhment of the promiſes. *Fides*, ſayes *Luther*, *intuetur verbum rei, Spes rem verbi.* And ſince the ſalvation which Hope expects, is ſo certain, ſo juſt at the door, and ſo exceeding glorious, hardſhip and labour in the way to ſuch a reſt, may the better be diſpenſed with. When the fleſh through weakneſs complains, and is ready to fail, then Hope encourages the heart, and ſayes, *Yet a little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry*; I expect him, and deliverance and a reward with him, and this expecta-

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tion of *Hope will never make ashamed*, Rom. 5. 5. This Helmet of Hope is of singular use, it covers the head of a Christian, in the day of Battel, it wards off the blows of discouragement, which would strike the Head under water. For this reason the Apostle is so earnest, that the believing *Romanes, might be made to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*, Rom. 15. 13.

4. That you may be armed against suffering, *cry by prayer for continual help and support from above.* Though you are never so compleatly armed, yet there is need of prayer, to call in fresh and renewed auxiliary force from heaven: Therefore the Apostle adds, *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance*, Eph. 6. 18. When men and Devils are wrestling with you, do you wrestle with God; and if you can but imitate your father *Israel*, and as *Princes prevail with God*; if you have power with the Almighty, who then can be too strong, too hard for you?

Fill your mouths with arguments, and cry unto the Lord, *That since he hath lead you into the field, he would not leave you in the battel; that since trouble is near, he would not be*

be far off, but near to help you; that since 'tis for his sake you are persecuted, by his power of Providence you may be preserved, and your troubles turned to his honour and your advantage. Tell him, *that your enemies are his, and 'tis because you dare not displease him, that men are enraged against you.* Tell him, *'Tis time for him to work, for men have made voyd his Law.* Tell him, *that you look and long for his salvation, and that you will never cease your importunity, till he appear and own that truth and cause which men endeavour to bear down, but you are standing up for unto the Death.* Prayer hath a mighty prevalency: *Luther* said, there was a kind of omnipotency therein. This weapon hath made *the Church terrible as an Army with Banners.* Persecutors and Devils likewise, have many times by Prayer been worsted.

USE IV.

If he that will be a Saint shall be a sufferer, *Let me exhort and perswade you that are Saints, to bear sufferings as become you.* Let not fretting, or fear, or sorrow prevail, unto your discomposure; but manifest to all the world, that you have somthing of God in you, by undergoing what bare nature would

would ſink under. Suffer not as wilful, but as conſcientious; be able to give Scripture reaſons for what you practice, and for what you refuſe. Beg of the Lord to make your way plain; and the way of duty being diſcovered, though there be a Lion, or a thorn hedge in that way, go forward notwithſtanding.

And among others, let theſe encouraging arguments be pondered by you.

1. *God is glorified by your ſufferings:* indeed, *on your adverſaries part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* 'Tis a ſign you really believe the Lords greatneſs and power, when you had rather have the whole world your enemies, than him to be your enemy. 'Tis a ſign you indeed believe his goodneſs and his promiſes, when you had rather part with all viſible comforts, than be caſt away from his preſence and favour. And by thus believing you glorifie him exceedingly. It argues alſo that the Lord hath your hearts in good earneſt, when no troubles, no afflictions, which for his ſake you are aſſaulted with, can alienate your affections from him. Further, you proclaim to all, what a good Maſter you ſerve, when your adverſaries by all that they can do, are not able to di-

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vert you from following him, cannot compel you to forsake his service. And who knows what convictions in the consciences of them that observe you, may be the effect of your constancy? Who knows but that by this means, some may be brought to make tryal of your Lord, and so to the liking and loving of him?

2. *By your suffering the Gospel is advanced.* The mighty power and efficacy of the Gospel is shewn forth, when it makes and keeps the Disciples hearts undaunted, though sufferings in the most fearful shapes and forms are objected to their view. How is the Gospel magnified, when believers are content to be the mark for an adulterous generation to shoot at, rather than be ashamed of it? 'Tis evident, that the Gospel is from God, else it could not thus support and comfort. The Apostle tells the *Philippians*, Chap. 1. 12. that his bonds and confinement, were to the *Gospels furtherance* and enlargment; his Brethren grew bold to speak the word without fear, and the word spoken was the more readily entertained, being credited by sustaining *Paul* and other Saints in all their tribulation.

3. *By your sufferings your selves are dignified.*

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You are highly graced, when called forth to be the Lords Witneſſes; *The Spirit of Glory, and of God reſteth upon you.* The Lord ſingles you out to combate with the Powers of earth and darkneſs, and he will encourage, and help, and give you victory. The Apoſtles, when they were beaten, did not murmur, *but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Jeſus,* Acts 5. 41. Shame is dignity, reproach is glory, loſs is gain, ſorrow is joy, pain is pleaſure, when endured for the ſake of Chriſt. Several of the Martyrs in the *Marian* Perſecution, when they went to the Stake, gave thanks upon this very account, that they died a death ſo noble as to dye Martyrs for the truth againſt *Babels* abominations, and to aſcend, as it were, in fiery Charots to the New *Jeruſalem.*

4. *When you are ſuffering, what a ſtock of prayers is going for you.* 'Tis an happineſs to be hardly dealt with, ſo we are prayed harder for. Our tribulation makes the bowels of mercy which are in our Brethren to yearn towards us; *they are bound with us in the ſame Bonds,* and ſympathize in our ſufferings; this makes them the more inſtant and earneſt with the Father of mercies on our behalf. When *James* the brother

ther of *John* had loſt his life, being killed by the Sword; and *Peter* had loſt his liberty, being apprehended and put in priſon, 'tis ſaid *that Prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church to God for him*, Acts 12. 5. And Prayer having entered into Heaven, brought an Angel to his reſcue, it ſhook the chains off *Peters* hands, and cauſed an iron gate of its own accord to open to him. Behold the ſtrength of believers prayers!

For my own particular, I ſeriouſly confeſs, that my impriſonment hath moſt happily in this regard befallen me; I have no reaſon to be vexed with, but rather to thank my adverſaries for their kindneſſe in thus confining of me. The ſtrictneſſe and cloſeneſſe of my priſon, hath made my caſe ſomwhat peculiar; and that alſo is turned unto good, for hereby the ſpirits of hundreds, both in City and Country, were ſtirred up to pray for me with greater fervency and enlargment: And to have ſo many prayers poured out for One particular perſon, is an ineſtimable priviledge. My Friends, I thank you, *God hath anſwered your requeſts, I have had that in priſon, which is ten thouſand times better than liberty, than the world, than life, than ten thouſand worlds and lives.* My Enemies, I cannot but thank you too, *becauſe you were the occaſion*

easion of the mercies I have received; though I really grieve to think that you did me good with so much harm to your selves.

5. *When you suffer, the Lord himself suffers with you.* Not only your fellow Members, but your Head doth sympathize and feel your burthens. *In all your afflictions, he is afflicted,* Isa. 63. 9. You have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of your infirmities: and the effect of this sympathie, must needs be a most tender regard to you, and readiness to relieve you in due season. *Luther* very well observes, that when any member of the *natural body* is harmed, the sense of pain appears in the head and face, the brows are knit, the forehead wrinkled, and the tongue cryes Oh! the whole countenance is alter'd. And in like manner 'tis in the *mystical Body*, when any member is wronged, if the injurious wretches could but see the face of Christ the Head, they might plainly perceive he feels the stroak, and is wounded in the wounds of his faithful followers. Therefore when *Paul*, while a zealous son of the Jewish Church, did persecute the Disciples of the Lord, and being exceedingly mad against them, did hale men and women, and commit them to prison,

priſon, Chriſt out of heaven cries out to him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou Me?* And ſince the great Phyſitian is himſelf wounded in your wounds, you may confidently expect an healing balm from him.

6. To encourage you, conſider, *Great is the power that reſts upon you in your ſufferings.* Such a power as ſhall not only make you ſtrong as *David*, but as the Angels of the Lord. A Saint ſtrengthned by the hands of the mighty God of *Jacob*, though ſhot at by the Archers, his Bow ſhall abide in ſtrength; therefore in Scripture he is compared *to an iron pillar, to a brazen wall, to a defenced City*, Jer. 1. 18. To ſhew, that though he is aſſaulted, and that with violence, yet he ſtands firm and unmoved. Little do the ungodly think who is the Saints helper. The Apoſtle conſidering the ſufficiency of that Grace which is promiſed in the evil day, proteſſeth he was not ſorry for that dayes approach, nay ſo far from that, he *glories* and *takes pleaſure in it*, 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. *And he ſaid unto me, my grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs: moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. There-*

fore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.

7. *Great is the peace vouchſafed to ſufferers.* Chriſt ſpeaks of this peace, and having left this Legacy, he adds with reaſon, that they ſhould not fear or be troubled, Joh. 14. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you: Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* How many doubts and fears have been cured by tribulation? When this for the Goſpels ſake hath been ſubmitted to, the heart which before trembled, and was diſconſolate, is filled with joy and peace in believing. And indeed, as trouble *is an evident token of perdition to the troublers*, ſo to them that for well-doing *are troubled, 'tis a token of ſalvation, and that of God*, Phil. 1. 28. Oh the Songs that have been ſung in the night of diſtreſs! Oh the ſweet refreſhing viſits that the Lord of Glory hath given to his priſoners; ſo that thoſe places of confinement, have been ſometimes turned into the very ſuburbs of the New Jeruſalem. And let not the greatneſs of ſuffering diſmay any; theſe will but occaſion your fuller joy, and more abundant

bundant consolation, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

8. *If you suffer with Christ, you shall also reign with him*, 2 Tim. 2. 12. And truly the Cross is light as a feather, if compared with the Crown. Send forth your *Faith* but as a *Spy* to the heavenly *Canaan*; let it take a view of the Glory there; let it bring but a leaf of the Palms that are to be put into your hands, but a gem of the Crowns that shortly will be put upon your heads, and you will presently be of the Apostles judgment, when he said, I *reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 18. Sufferers will find a more abundant entrance into the Kingdome. They are with a great deal of honour pointed at, *Rev.* 7. 14. *These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their Robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* How many encouragements are here to suffer; sufficient, if duly weighed, to make you suffer, not only with patience, but with gladness.

USE V.

I shall conclude this Doctrine with a Caution to the unholy: *Do not think your condition happy because freed from sufferings now.* Your sin at last will find you out; it is pursuing after you to overthrow you, and it will, if you repent not speedily, overtake you. And though you are *not in trouble, like other men, that cleanse their hearts, and wash their hands in innocency*, Eternity will be long enough for you to be plagued, and (wo wo to you) then your sufferings will be extreme, being not at all sweetned with the least mixture of consolation.

The Second Doctrine.

No sufferings should cause the Saints to be afraid.

Says the Text, *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.* See also Isa. 37. 3, 4. *Strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not.*

Two things in the opening of this Doctrine are to be done. *One* is to shew *that there*

there is an aptneſs in the Saints to be afraid of ſufferings. The other to demonſtrate, *the unreaſonableneſs of giving way to this fear.*

In the firſt place I am to ſhew, that there is an aptneſs in the Saints to give way to fear, when ſufferings are coming: this is implyed in the Text, *Fear not*, which intimates that by fears they would be aſſaulted, though thoſe fears ought to be repelled. There is a twofold fear; a fear *that is a duty*, a fear *that is an infirmity.*

1. *A fear that is a Duty*, and that is the fear of the Lord: This fear is the beginning of wiſdom, and a great preſervation from evil; this fear is a grace to be prayed for, and as a grace is promiſed in the New Covenant. I *will put my fear into their hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me*, Jer. 32. 40. This fear hath nothing of torment in it; but as it argues the man bleſſed in whom it hath place, ſo it is very conſiſtent with *delight*, and *great delight*, Pſ. 112. 1. *Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his Commandments.* This fear of God will ſwallow up other fear. If we ſanctifie the Lord of Hoſts in our hearts, by making him our fear and dread, nothing beſides will be ſufficient to diſmay us.

2. There is *a fear which is an infirmity*, and that is the fear of man, or any evils that upon the account of Religion may be brought upon us. This fear in the Text is forbid: Yet this fear is apt to seize upon believers; and truly they find it much more difficult to overcome those fears, than the evils themselves, whereby their fears are raised.

Several things there are, whereby fears are apt to be raised in Believers.

1. *The greatnesse of the evils which they may be exposed to*: Not only their credit, but their livelyhood; not only their livelyhood, but their lives may be struck at. And running the hazard of *losing all*, makes timorous nature to advise, and endeavour to dissuade them from it. Our Lord does not limit his followers to venture so far, and no further, but commands expressly to stick at nothing; the neareſt Relations, the deareſt enjoyments, must be hated, when they stand in competition with him, that is, less loved than he is; *Luke* 14. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple.* In times of trouble, Men and Devils are let more loose

loose, and so are likely to lay on load on Christs Disciples; and the apprehension of such heavy burthens, may cause some dismayednes of spirit.

2. Fear is apt to be raised *by the proximity and nearnesse of evils.* When the Saints behold their persecutors full of fury, their tongues whet like a sword, and their hands lifted up to give the blow; when they see calamity hastening towards them, and distress like an armed man, which they cannot resist nor avoyd, then also their temptation will be strong to fear.

3. *These evils are heightned by Satan, who endeavours what he can to impresse fear upon them.* He represents their approaching sufferings, in the most amazing forms, to their imaginations. He tells them, it will be sad to be the scorn of all that look on them, to be counted *the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things.* Satan tells them it will be sad to have their goods spoyled, their houses taken from them, or leveld with the ground, to see their Families undone, and pined with extremity of want, to feel in their own persons the hand of violence, especially when sinful compliance may prevent it. The Devil buzzes in their ears nothing but *Dungeons,*

shackles, swords, axes, faggots, stakes, furious flames, and thus endeavours to fright them out of the way of righteousness.

And 'tis not unusual when such dreadful things are represented to their imaginations, to assault their faith, and to pester them with unbelieving and blasphemous injections against Christ and his word, endeavouring to make them question the certainty and truth of that glorious *life and immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel*, 2 Tim. 1. 10. And if these thoughts of infidelity are not watched and prayed against, they will dead and overwhelm the heart, and prove of a very sinking nature. The Lord therefore is to be intreated to rebuke Satan, who by such blasphemies strikes at his honour, as well as at our safety and peace.

4. Add also, *That Grace in believers is imperfect, and therefore fear is the more incident.* There is much of corrupted, as well as renewed Nature; and corrupted nature sides with Satan to affrighten them, that so they may cast faith and a good conscience over board, to keep the Vessel from drowning, and secure themselves.

In the second place I am to shew *The unreasonableness of this fear in the Saint*.

Now

Now the unreasonableness of it will be abundantly evinced by these arguments.

1. *Let us compare the mightiest enemies of the Saints with him who is their helper.* Their adversaries may be mighty, but their Helper is Almighty. If the everlasting strength of the Lord Jehovah were but considered, fear would be ashamed of it self in those that belong to him, and are protected by him. Believers enemies (take the very proudest and strongest of them) in comparison of God are but *Nothing, less than nothing, and vanity*, Isa. 40. And is it not unreasonable to be afraid of nothing? and more unreasonable to be afraid of less than nothing? O ye Saints, remember what a power is for you; whose hands uphold you, even the very same that doth uphold all things. Your enemies themselves are in Gods hands, *they cannot live or move, or act without him*; they are but weapons in his hand, which cannot strike one blow more than he sees needful to be given you; all the wounds which they make shall be healing; and by all their instruments of death they shall but push you forward, and hasten you along in Heavens way.

And if your mighty God rebuke these per-

perſecutors, preſently they muſt ſtoop and bow, and fall down before him. He can tye their hands, nay take away their breath when he liſteth; and when their breath goeth forth, and they return to their duſt, all their thoughts and deſigns againſt you will periſh, their envy and revenge will be come to an end, when once the vengeance of God, which is the vengeance of hell fire, hath taken hold of them. The Grave and Hell will keep them far from ever moleſting of you more.

2. *Let a compariſon be made between the cra'tineſſe of believers enemies, and their Gods wiſdome.* The Lord knows the thoughts of man. that they are vanity. He ſees their projects, and knows how to fruſtrate their deſigns. That's a notable place, *Job* 5. 12, 13. *He diſappointeth the devices of the crafty, ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterpriſe; he taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and the counſel of the froward is carryed headlong.* The Lord is wiſe enough, not only to deliver us, but alſo to take the Politicians in their own craftineſs. He looks and laughs at the plots of *Rome* and Hell to undermine his Kingdom; and that which they intend as a ſupport to the principality of darkneſs, ſhall prove its downfall; and

Sion

Sion ſhall be built on *Babylons* ruines. *Solomon* ſayes, *there is no wiſdome, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord*, Prov. 21. 30. And by very good conſequence, there is no wiſdom, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt his people; why then ſhould his people fear? *If one wiſe man were able to defend a little City, having few men in it, againſt a great King that came againſt it, and beſieged it*, Eccl. 9. 14, 15. Surely in the wiſdome of the Lord, who is *only wiſe*, whoſe underſtanding is infinite, there may be ſtrong confidence.

3. Again, *Compare the hatred of the Saints enemies with the love which the Lord bears them.* Great is the hatred of the world, greater is the hatred of the Devil; but oh by infinite degrees greater than either, than both, is the Love of God. The Love of God to believers is very tender, draws out his care towards them; 'tis a love that is unchangeable, and ſo vaſt as paſſes all dimenſions, and underſtanding. Therefore they may be emboldened, and conclude, that this love will be ten thouſand times more beneficial, than the hatred of any creature can poſſibly be injurious. In the loving kindneſs of God, there is very great ſecurity, *Pſal.* 5. 12. *For thou Lord*

wilt

wilt bleſs the righteous, with favour wilt thou compaſſe him as with a Shield. Our enemies indeed may be many, and may hate us with cruel hatred; but their hatred can no more equal the love of God, than their ſtrength can vie with his moſt glorious power.

4. To ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of the Saints fear, let this be conſidered, *That this God, whoſe power and wiſdom and love are thus beyond compare, is ever with them.* Fear thou not, ſayes God by the Prophet, *for I am with thee,* Iſa. 4. 10. He is not out of the way when his people want him; he is a *preſent help* in the time of need. The Saints need not go far to ſeek their God; he fills the earth as well as heaven, and is alwayes ready to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of thoſe that truſt in him. The Lord is alwayes within hearing; *his eye is upon the righteous, and his ear is open to their cry,* Pſal. 34. 15. He beſets his people behind and before, and layes his hand upon them: ſurely their faith may conclude, ſince God is ſo neat them, and does beſet and fence them, that they are in ſafeguard.

5. *The Lord hath engaged by an everlaſting Covenant to be their God:* What, or why therefore ſhould believers fear? *Be not diſ-*

mayed

mayed, for I am thy God, in that forecited place, *Isa.* 41. 10. The Lord ſtands nearly related to the Saints: now 'tis certain, that Relation, though 'tis *minimæ entitatis*, yet 'tis *efficaciæ maximæ*, it hath ſmall entity, but great efficacy. He is *their God, their Father, their Husband*; and will he not be a Buckler and a Fortreſs to his children, his Sons eſpouſed ones? Will he not take care of his Jewels, of his portion, of his peculiar treaſure? will he patiently ſuffer the apple of his eye to be touched? Let the Covenant be ſtudied, and what's implyed, in that, *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people*; and fear will quickly give way to confidence.

6. *The Lord intends to glorifie himſelf in his peoples preſervation.* They need not fear, God will not miſs of his glory; he will be exalted, and therefore his people ſhall be remembred. Gods honour, and the Saints ſafety, are twiſted together. It was a ſtrong argument which *Joſhua* pleaded; If *Iſrael* fly, and the *Canaanites* prevail, then *what wilt thou do for thy great Name?* Joſh. 7. 9. That place in the *Proverbs*, *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower, the righteous fly unto it and are ſafe*, may not only thus be expounded, That the power, and faithfulneſs, and

mercy

mercy of God, by which he hath made himself known as by his name, are a safe shelter to the righteous; but also thus the place may be applyed: God for his Name sake will be a strong Tower to his children; and when they plead his Name, he will glorifie himself in their protection. To secure his own honour, he will secure those whom he hath taken the charge of; they shall be saved, either *sub cælo*, or *in cælo*; they shall either on earth find a Chamber in the day of calamity, till the indignation be overpast; or they shall be housed in the celestial Mansions, beyond the fear or possibility of danger.

Thus have I demonstrated the unreasonableness of the Saints fear. The Application of this Doctrine follows.

USE I.

Although I would have you fearless of suffering, yet some Cautions are very needful to be given you. Rashness is not a Grace, though Christian fortitude and courage is.

1. Take heed *of augmenting your sufferings needlesly by want of wisdom.* Died *Abner* as a fool dieth? Do believers suffer as fools suffer?

ſuffer? When Chriſt tells his Diſciples, that he ſent them forth as ſheep among wolves, *He bids them to be wiſe as Serpents, to beware of men*, and uſes much what the ſame Language that one of his Prophets did before, *Jer.* 9. 4, 5. *Take ye heed every one of his Neighbour, truſt ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly ſupplant, and every neighbour will walk with ſlanders, and they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not ſpeak the truth; they have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, and they weary themſelves to commit iniquity.* Be wary what, and to whom you ſpeak: In evil times the prudent keep ſilence; when men are made offenders for a word. Do not heartily credit every profeſſour, there are many falſe brethren, who though they ſpeak you fair, have even abominations in their heart. Beg wiſdom of God that he would guide you with his eye.

But let not a wily, and ſelfiſh heart impoſe upon you, and call cowardiſe by the name of diſcretion. If thy heart be aſſured to the world, and thou art loath to part with thy enjoyments that are earthly, for the enjoyment of Chriſt and Glory; if thou lookeſt upon earthly things as ſutable, and ſpiritual with a ſtrange eye:

ſuſpect

ſuſpect thy wiſdom to come not from a-bove, and that 'twill be found folly in the end.

2. *Take heed of ſuffering as an evil doer.* You may in all likelihood have much evil ſpoken againſt you; but if it be falſly, 'tis well enough. That counſel and caution of the Apoſtle, is much to be obſerved, 1 *Pet.* 4. 15. *But let none of you ſuffer as a murtherer, or as a thief, or as a buſie body in other mens matters.* You muſt indeed expect to go through evil report, as well as good, and diſhonour as well as honour, 2 *Cor.* 6. 8. But do not by any ſiniſter aimes, by any unwarrantable practice, give conſcience juſt cauſe to reproach you, as well as your enemies. If you are convinced and ſuffer as evil doers, if covetouſneſs, lying, injuſtice, ſedition, rebellion, be juſtly laid to your charge, you will not ſuffer alone, but the Goſpel, and your brethren who are innocent, will be branded for your ſakes. Oh let there be nothing of a crime in your ſuffering; purely let it be for the ſake of purity in worſhip, and purity of life; then the greater comfort will redound to you, and advantage to the Church of Chriſt.

3. *Take heed of vain glory in your ſufferings.* That glory that is but vain, is not worth the

the seeking, much less the suffering to attain. Though a sufferer be in a low condition, yet he is in great danger of being puft up with pride. If you design the advancing of your own esteem, and desire to be pointed at as those that are resolute and constant, you are Self's, and not Christs Martyrs. How far may pride and vain glory carry an unsound professour? He *may give all his goods to feed the poor*, nay *his body to be burned*, and yet in all this seek himself, and be destitute of love to Jesus Christ, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. As the Apostle sayes, *Phil.* 2. 3. *Let nothing be done*, so may I say, let nothing be suffered *through strife or vain glory*. 'Tis a poor thing to be admired and commended of men, if the Lord does not commend you. If you seek not *his* approbation, and that honour which comes from *him*, you may suffer here and eternally besides. Aim not therefore at applause, or any such carnal, by, and base end: but let this be your design, that *Christ may be magnified by you, whether it be by life or by death*, Phil. 1. 20.

4. *Take heed of being Saints in shew, and suffering in a good Cause with an evil conscience.* Hypocritical professors are in a very bad case; because *Professors*, the world hates

them; becauſe *hypocritical* they are hated by the Lord: They have a form of godlineſs, therefore the world ſtrikes at them; they deny the power of godlineſs, therefore God will not ſecure them. Oh therefore beg an upright heart, and be ſure to walk in truth. Cover not with the vail of hypocriſie any luſt that you judg pleaſing or profitable; but be *Jewes* inwardly, *Iſraelites* indeed, not contenting your ſelves with a name that you are alive; this you may have, and yet be dead in ſin, and at laſt damn'd for it.

USE II.

Let me diſſwade you from fearing any thing that may befall you for following the Lord Jeſus. And let theſe two things be thought on, that fear is both, a *Torment*, and a *Snare*.

1. *Fear is a torment.* The fearful heart is moved, as the leaves are with the wind. What anguiſh ſeizeth upon the timorous ſpirit at the report of evil tydings? how doth it ſink into an hopeleſs kind of dejection? and ſo is made more bare and naked unto the ſtroke and dint of calamities which are invading.

2. *Fear*

2. *Fear is a ſnare*, Prov. 29. 25. One that fears an arm of fleſh, will ſoon be hurried away from God, and into almoſt any unlawful courſes, which by his carnal and diſturbed mind are judged to have a tendency to his preſervation. *Peter* fears, and denyes Chriſt, and not only ſo, but falls a curſing, ſwearing that he did not know him. How is he foiled through fear, who before ſaid, *Though all have offended and forſake thee, yet will not* I. *Cranmer* fears, and againſt his Conſcience ſubſcribes to Popery; and anathematizes the Hereſie of *Luther* and *Zuinglius*, thoſe reſtorers of the Goſpel, and of pure and undefiled Religion, which had a long time layn buryed by the prevailing of Antichriſt. *Spira* fears the looſing of his eſtate, the beggering of his wife and children, the hazarding of his life, and renounces the Proteſtant Religion, but preſently was ſeiz'd upon by the Pangs of deſpair; and to the terrour and aſtoniſhment of all about him, ſpake as if he had been in Hell it ſelf, even while he was alive. Oh therefore be afraid of being afraid; if this paſſion prevail, you may quickly fall ſo foully, as to make you weep bitterly, if not eternally.

USE III.

I shall conclude with several Antidotes against this sinful and ensnaring fear of sufferings. The Antidotes are these.

1. One Antidote is *a well grounded assurance of the love of God.* By this love, fear will be cast out. The Apostle was so far from being afraid, *that he gloryed in tribulation*, and the reason was, because *the love of God*, that is, the sense and perswasion of it, *was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which was given to him*, Rom. 5. 3, 5. When we know that God is *ours*, we may conclude that afflictions, troubles, and death are ours, that evil men and evil Angels too are ours, that is, working out our good, though contrary to their intentions. The enemies of believers are but as so many Scullions to scour them, and make them look the brighter. The assured Christian concludes, that greater is he that is in him, than he that is in the World, and therefore he is undaunted. Heark, how confidently the Saints of old spake, who knew the God of *Jacob* was theirs, and with them, *Psal.* 46. 1, 2. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble;*

there-

therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carryed into the midst of the Seas.

Give diligence therefore to make your Calling and Election sure; bring your Grace to the Touchstone of the Scripture, that the truth thereof may be evident; pray that the Lord would search you, and lead you out of every evil way; and that his Spirit may bear witness with your spirits that you are indeed his Children.

2, A second Antidote against fear, *is a clear Conscience.* A pacified and purified Conscience, will make the heart very couragious. The Heathen Poet could say,

——— *Hic murus aheneus esto;*
Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.
Horat. Epist. 2.

A Brazen Wall is not a greater security than an unspotted conscience. And *Solomon* tells us, *that a righteous man is bold as a Lion.* The Apostle *Paul*, when he was pressed out of measure by the weight of troubles, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life; was he dismayed? No; so far from that, that he rejoyced. This was strange indeed: What

might be the cauſe of his gladneſs, when ſenſe being judg, his condition was ſo exceeding doleful? *Our rejoycing is this*, ſayes he, *even the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdome, but by the grace of God we have had our converſation in the world*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Make not therefore, eſpecially in troublous times, any breach upon conſcience, by cloſing with temptations, for at that breach fear will aſſault you.

3. A third Antidote againſt fear, *is truſting in God*. *David* ſayes, *What time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee*, Pſal. 56. 3. There's the diſtemper, *fear*, and the remedy againſt it, *faith in God*. So Pſal. 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tydings, his heart is fixed*: What fixes the righteous mans heart? *Truſting in the Lord*. Pray for the increaſe of faith: be well acquainted with the promiſes, wherein God hath ſaid he will be *a ſhield, an hiding place, a covert, a ſtrong Tower, a Saviour*; and theſe promiſes will be as food for your faith to live upon, and to grow ſtrong by. But be ſure let your truſting in God be joyned *with the doing of good*, Pſal. 37. 3. with a deſire and deſign to pleaſe him; elſe he will reject your confidence as preſumption, and you ſhall not proſper in it.

4. A Fourth

4. A Fourth Antidote againſt fear, *is calling upon God.* *David* when he was in danger, cryes that he may be lead to the Rock that was higher than he; when ſurrounded with enemies *he gave himſelf unto prayer*, Pſal. 109. 4. and by this means he got above his fears and terrours. He tells us how effectual prayer was, *Pſal.* 34. 4. *I ſought the Lord, and he heard me, and deliverid me from all my fears.* The Coneys are a feeble folk, but have their dwelling among the Rocks: You may learn a great deal of wiſdome from thoſe little creatures. By Faith and Prayer you ſhould be working your ſelves further into the Rock of Ages, and that Rock you will find impregnable.

5. A Fifth Antidote againſt fear, *is an heavenly Converſation.* They who are much above, that have their Treaſure in that place, where neither moth corrupteth, nor thief approacheth, will not be afraid of priſons, of being robb'd, of being ſlain for the Teſtimony of Jeſus. Their ſouls cannot be touched, their beſt riches are durable, and out of their enemies reach; their adverſaries cannot by diſtraining take away their glory or grace from them: and when this life is done, they will enter up-

on that life which is infinitely better.

They who walk closely with God, and whose hearts as an heave-offering are frequently given to him, *being lifted up in his wayes*, who every day do take several turns *in the City that hath foundations*; who often think of the glorious prize, and what it will be to be perfectly holy, and most fully satisfied in the uninterrupted and never ending enjoyment of God; such will be indifferent what on earth they meet with; they will not be afraid of what man can do, since when their enemies do their worst, they do their best; for when they take away their lives, they do but send them thither, where they long and groan earnestly to be received, and to make their everlasting abode.

The Apostle informs us, *That they who mind earthly things are enemies to the Crosse of Christ*, Phil. 3. 18, 19. They feel not its crucifying vertue, they are afraid of it, they are offended at it: but as for himself, *whose conversation was in heaven, and who perpetually from thence was looking for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*, he knew how to be abased, how to be hungry, now to suffer need, and learned in whatever state he was therewith to be contented, *Phil.* 4. 11, 12. compared with *v.* 20. of *ch.* 3.

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6. A ſixth Antidote againſt fear, *is a due conſideration who your enemies and troublers are.* Bring them into the Sanctuary, and there take a view of them, weigh them in the ballance, and themſelves with all their power, will be found ſo light, that you will conclude that to be a very vain fear, which ſuch vain and weak creatures as they are, do raiſe in you.

1. Your enemies *are but men*; let them do their worſt, their moſt, they can but kill the body. *Ceaſe ye from man*, ſaith the Prophet, *whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of.* The hand of man, as 'tis not able to ſupport us, ſo neither to throw us down; and conſequently he doth no more deſerve to be feared, than to be truſted in by us.

2. Your enemies are men *whom the Lord hates* and ſets his face againſt. He ordains his arrows againſt the perſecutors, *Pſal.* 7. 13. God ſhall ſhoot at them, ſuddenly ſhall they be wounded. He is more angry at them, than they can be enraged againſt you; and it will not be long ere he eaſe himſelf and you too of th ſe burthenſome oppreſſours, *Iſa.* 1. 24. *Therefore ſaith the Lord, the Lord of Hoſts, the mighty one of Iſrael, Ah I will eaſe me of my*

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adversaries, and avenge me of my enemies. Fear becomes *them* that have such a mighty God their enemy; not *you* that have him to be your Father and Defender.

The Third Doctrine.

Among other troubles, some believers endure bonds and imprisonment.

In the Catalogue of sufferings, imprisonment is reckoned by the Holy Ghost, *Heb.* 11. 36. *And others had tryal of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment.* And the Apostle speaks after this manner, *Acts* 20. 22, 23. *And now behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.* The members of Christ, though made free by their Head, yet may have fetters put upon them by unreasonable men. In the imprisonment of the Saints, two things are to be considered.

1. *Their confinement, and the restraint that is laid upon them.* Liberty is agreeable to Nature, 'tis therefore a great tryal to lose it; and the closer the imprisonment is,

Nature

Nature accounts it the more irksome. *To have lovers and friends and acquaintance put far away*, may well be lookt upon as a great affliction. To be within double doors, and those doubly barr'd; to look through Iron grates, is a condition which needs something from above to sweeten it.

2. *Their being numbred among evil doers*, is another part of the imprisoned believers tryal. As the Lord himself *was numbred among the transgressours*, Isa. 53. 12. so are his Prisoners. The same Gaol contains Thieves and Harlots, and the Witnesses of Jesus; their innocency is sullied, and things that they know not are laid to their charge: But the Lord hath promised, that within a while, *their righteousnesse shall be brought forth as the light, and their judgment as the Noon day*, Psal. 37. 6.

Now the Reason why the Saints are imprisoned by their enemies, is twofold.

1. *That they may be punished.* If their enemies can go no further, they will go thus far, and hereby they think to take some revenge upon them; though they little imagine what a sweet place they send the Saints to; God turns their revenge into a kindnesse.

2. *That they may be hindred from doing good,*

good, is another Reason why the Saints are confined. They went about doing good while Liberty was enjoyed, therefore they are restrained, and their feet made fast, that they may no longer be thus employed, though it be as their Lord and Master himself was, in the dayes of his flesh. But it is the application of this Doctrine I principally intend.

USE I.

Of Direction, how the Saints should behave themselves when they are imprisoned. Their carriage I shall direct in these particulars.

1. They must carry themselves *humbly before God*. Sin and the desert of it should be called to remembrance; and how a worse place than a prison hath been justly merited. You should lament your not improving of Liberty while you had it, your unprofitableness, your unusefulness, that so little good was done, when you had opportunities in your hands. The Crosse indeed that's laid upon you, is a badge of honour; and yet withall there is somewhat *medicinal* in it, which argues remainders of spiritual distempers that should be mat-

matter of humiliation. The more humble and contrite you are, the more visits you are likely to have from the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity: *He dwells with the lowly, that he may revive the spirit of the humble, and that he may revive the heart of the contrite ones*, Isa. 57. 15.

2. You must carry your selves *meekly and modestly towards your enemies*; you must bless them that curse you, and pray for your despightful persecutors, *Mat.* 5. 44. Call not the Wild-fire of your own passions by the name of zeal: and ever remember that excellent and divine Maxime, *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousnesse of God*, Jam. 1. 20. Imitate the perfect Pattern, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffer'd, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Meekness and humility will be lovely and convincing too, in the eyes of your adversaries, and they may be brought to acknowledge, if Christ hath any followers, that *you* do most resemble him, and are likely to be the persons.

3: *Be not daunted at imprisonment.* Look with another kind of countenance than those do that suffer for evil doing. Let not your joyes be so low as to be in the power

of

of creatures, to rob you of them. Shew by your chearfulneſs you have choſen that good part which men cannot take away from you. Check your ſpirits when they begin to deſpond, and ſay with *David*, *Pſal.* 43. *ult. Why art thou caſt down O my ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* And that you may be thus fortified, beg that the Lord would ſtrengthen you according to his glorious power with all might, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs, *Col.* 1. 11.

4. *Since you are taken off from other buſineſs, abound the more in duty.* Now the Throne of Grace ſhould be often viſited; and the Word which ſtrengthens in weakneſs, which revives in heavineſs, ſhould be more than ever ſearched into. It is meet that *Priſons* ſhould be *Houſes of Prayer.* Being ſequeſtred from the World, you ſhould be the more with God. Pull up all the Flood-gates, and let the ſtream of your affections run with an holy violence towards him: Ever be telling him what you need, what you deſire, and be encouraged by the promiſe he hath made *to ſatiate the weary, and to repleniſh every ſorrowful ſoul*, Jer. 31. 25. Fellow-

Fellowship with God will make solitude pleasant; you will find, though alone, that you have the best company. If you are continually almost speaking to God by supplication and thanksgiving, and hearing what he speaks to you, by his Word, and Providences, and Spirit, you will have reason to profess, that a *Prison* is one of the best places of abode, next to the *Sanctuary* and the *New Jerusalem*.

5. *Let imprisonment be improved so as to further your progress in sanctification.* Ransack every corner of your hearts. Deal much more severely with your lusts than men can deal with you; cry out with violence against your fleshly and worldly inclinations. 'Tis sin that deads and imprisons your Spirits; the more sanctified you are, the more you will be at liberty. Tell the Lord, and speak it from your very hearts, that sin is the worst of all your adversaries, and that the remainders of the old man are worse than any fetters in the world. Never let the Lord alone, till you find the body of death pining and dying sensibly away, the world as a contemptible thing more under your feet, and your inward man encreasing strength, and growing up apace *to the measure of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ*, Eph. 4. 13.

USE

USE II.

Of Consolation to imprisoned believers. Several things may be suggested as grounds of comfort and encouragement.

1. *God can come at his people through barr'd and bolted doors.* No dungeon can keep the Prisoner *close* from him. We read that the Lord came to his Disciples *the door being shut, and said, Peace be unto you.* And if he come into the Prison, the Door being shut, and by his Spirit say, *Peace be to thee,* the Prisoners heart will leap for joy, he will say, not *how dreadful,* but *how delightful* is this place? *this is no other than the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.* Our adversaries, let them dispose of us where and how they please, cannot keep God from us, or us from God, they cannot shut us up from his presence: and where his gracious presence is vouchsafed, there is *rest*; all inconvenienees and miseries are so light that they are hardly worth the taking notice of.

2. *The heart may be enlarged where the body is confined.* The Soul may be brought out of Prison, when the body is committed to it. In the *Mittimus* the form of Law runs thus,

thus, That the Goaler take the *body* of such an one. Verily over the spirit they have no power. What believer would not be content to be confined, upon condition his heart might be made more free *to* duty, more free *in* duty? upon condition his desires might swell and overflow, and his longings after the God of all grace, might grow much stronger than the thirst of the most sensual after pleasures, or of the most worldly minded after Gold and Silver.

3. *The Lord who will condemn those that visit not the Prisoners*, Mat. 25. *will not fail to visit them himself*. And as they more need refreshments they shall surely enjoy them. He will behold them with a reconciled face, and say to them, *I am your light and your salvation*, be not terrified with the darkness of the calamitous day wherein you live. The groaning of the prisoner doth pierce the Heavens, and enters into the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth, who will return an answer of peace and consolation.

4. *The Prisoners of Christ are Prisoners of Hope*. They are in but during the King of Saints his pleasure. If Christ say, *Come forth*, even a *Lazarus* shall break out of a Grave: And if he have the Key of the Grave, surely the Keyes of prisons are at

ommand; they cannot hold any whom he hath a mind to set at liberty. Prisons may soon grow sick of the Saints, and vomit them out as the Whale did *Jonah*. However, it will not be long e're the day of glorious liberty, and of full Redemption come; and then the adversaries of the Saints will be bound hand and foot, and thrown into outer darkness; and the Saints will have liberty to enter into the Kingdome prepared for them, to see God face to face, without any lett from others or themselves, and to live eternally in *his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore*, Psal. 16. ult.

The Fourth Doctrine.

The Devil is the imprisoner of Believers.

Sayes the Text, *Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison.* The words may be referred more particularly to the Ministers, or more generally to the Saints in *Smyrna*.

1. *More particularly to the Ministers.* As by *One Candlestick* the whole Body of the Congregation, so by *One Angel* the whole company of the Pastours are [illegible] under-

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ſtood. *Unto you I ſay, and to the reſt in Thyatira*, Rev. 2. 24. That is, unto you the Miniſters, and the reſt of believers. So here, *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of* you *into priſon*; that is, *you* who are the Shepherds, that ſo againſt the flock he may have the greater advantage.

Faithful Miniſters Satan never could, neither can he now endure. He endeavours if he can to corrupt them, to puff them up with pride, to draw them aſide by filthy lucre, to make them fall ſome way or other; and he does it with this deſign, that their doctrine may be the leſs heeded, and his Kingdome not ſo much weakned by them. But if he be not able to *corrupt*, he will be induſtrious to *diſcourage* them. They trouble him, will not let him alone, they will not ſuffer the ſtrong man armed to keep his houſe in peace, but by warning, exhorting, reproving, rebuking the ſecure and ungodly, endeavour to diſpoſſeſs him. No wonder if the Devil wax angry at them, and fling them out of their houſes into places of confinement.

The Prince of darkneſs would not that theſe *Stars* ſhould ſhine; he would fain have theſe *Candles put under Buſhels*; for

Light discovers what Satan is, what a defiled, hateful and hating spirit; it discovers what his works be, namely to pollute us, and by polluting to fit us for perdition. Light also discovers what sin is, and the unconceivable needfulness and excellency of the Lord Jesus. And hereupon the Devils Vassals, several of them, are made to bethink themselves, and *are delivered from the Power of darkness, and translated into the Kingdome of the Son of God*, Col. 1. 13. The joyful sound of mans salvation is harsh in Satans ears; he imprisons therefore the Publishers of these glad-tydings, and close sometimes, that the flock may be edified neither in a publick, nor more private way.

2. The words may be referred *more generally to the Saints in Smyrna*. Every member of Christ the Devil hates, and would fain tear from him; every sheep this roaring Lion would make his prey; therefore he raises persecution to dishearten them from following their great Shepherd. Though herein the subtle Serpent playes the fool egregiously; for the Saints grow more acquainted with their Lord in Prison, like him the better, and are knit the faster to him ever after.

But

But here it may be enquired, How the Devil doth caſt the Saints into priſon? The Reſolution of this ſhall be in theſe three particulars.

1. *The Devil ſtirs up falſe accuſers of Believers.* The Name which the Holy Ghoſt gives him in the Text is ὁ κατήγορος *a calumniator*, or *falſe accuſer*. He accuſeth the Brethren before God, and his Inſtruments at his inſtigation do it before men. He inſpired falſe witneſſes againſt Chriſt; he doth the ſame againſt Chriſts followers. This unclean Spirit is utterly alienated both from *Truth* and *Love*. Malicious lyes, eſpecially againſt the Brotherhood, he is the Father of: Words that they never ſpake, nay, which to ſpeak is againſt their conſcience; Deeds that they never did, nay which they abhor to do, are notwithſtanding fathered upon them by the children of the *Father of lyes and lyars*.

2. The Devil cheriſhes in the minds of his ſervants unreaſonable jealouſies and ſurmizes concerning Saints; and this is another matter which occaſions their impriſonment; they are lookt upon as dangerous perſons, and that 'tis inconvenient and unſafe to have them at liberty. As the Primitive Chriſtians had the skins of

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brute beasts put upon them, and then were worryed. So believers are represented by Satan to the minds of their enemies, as *enemies to Government*, as *Turners of the world upside down*, as *those that would set the Nation in a combustion.* But oh! how far are they from deserving such a Character! They pray earnestly and desire heartily, under authority *to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty*. They are indeed the Disciples of the Prince of peace, and make conscience of following after *Peace* and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord, *Heb.* 12. 14.

3. *The Devil hightens the enmity against, and hatred of piety, that naturally is in the minds of the ungodly*; so that it breaks out into acts of cruelty and injustice. Although corrupted Nature of it self be very furious, yet 'tis more violent when the Devil joyns with it. He can set an edge on the lusts of men, and make them the more impetuous. When concupiscence is blown up by an unclean Spirit, how doth it burn and flame then? When pride is hightned by a proud Devil, how uncontroulable is it by any advise or consideration? and in like manner, when envy, hatred and malice, and uncharitableness (as they are put toge-

together in the Letany) are made more keen by a ſpightful Satan: No wonder if the tongues of the ungodly prove ſcourges, and their hands ſtrike at believers liberty, if not at their lives.

USE I.

Of counſel and advice to perſecutors. I know not but this Book may light into the hands of one of them. Underſtand O enemy, whoever thou art, that thou haſt a friend at the Gaol houſe who wiſhes thee well, who prayes for thy welfare as well as his own, who would ſtop thee in thy pernicious way; not ſo much for the Saints ſake as for thy own: for thou doeſt thy ſelf, not them, the greateſt miſchief. Let not O ye perſecutors, your rage ſtop your eares, be a little in cool blood, and hearken unto theſe two words of counſel.

1. Conſider then by whom you are acted. The Devil caſts the Saints into priſon, whoſe inſtruments and ſervants then are you? Is there not a better Maſter to be ſerved, a better work to be employed about? What thanks do you think our Lord Chriſt will give you for the

ſervice you do to this deſtroyer.

But you will ſay, *'Tis zeal puts us upon what we do, and we hope we do God and his Church good ſervice:* Yes, ſo the Jews thought they ſerved God, when they ſet themſelves againſt his Son: and Chriſt himſelf foretold this, *Joh.* 16. 2. *They ſhall put you out of the Synagogues, they ſhall excommunicate you, yea the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doth God good ſervice.*

2. *O that you would become friends to your ſelves, by being friends unto the Saints.* The Apoſtle *Paul* ſayes that before his converſion, *he was exceeding mad* againſt the Lords Diſciples, *Acts* 26. 11. He ſhewed himſelf to be exceeding mad indeed, to ſet himſelf againſt them that were ſo dear to the Lord Jeſus. But at laſt he is recovered to his wits, he is cured of that perſecuting phrenzy that poſſeſt and acted him, and then *he preached that faith, which once he endeavoured to deſtroy,* Gal. 1. 23. O that you would become propagatours of that Goſpel which now you oppoſe and hinder from being preached.

USE II.

USE II.

Of consolation to the prisoners of Jesus Christ.

1. *Think how weak the Devil is, if compared with the Captain of your Salvation.* Christ has fought with this old Dragon and overcome him, he has tried his strength, and has been much too hard for him: He has taken the Devil captive and holds him in a chain. As the great Emperour and Conquerour *Tamerlane* kept *Bajazet* the Turkish King in an iron cage: So the Lord Jesus having subdued Satan keeps him in shackles; he cannot stir to destroy a Swine, much less to molest a Saint without Christs leave; and will he give the Devil leave to do any thing to his faithful followers that may be really to their prejudice?

2. There is less danger when Satan rages, then when he flatters; 'tis better he should cast you into prison for well doing, then draw you into his snare, and unto the commission of evil. His pleasing temptations are most hard to be resisted. When you see him furious and play the Devil

Devil indeed, as 'tis a ſign he has loſt you, ſo his enmity being more perceivable, it will make you fly to that *Merciful and Faithful High Prieſt who knowes how to ſuccour them that are tempted*, Heb. 2. ult. And beſides his hatred at ſuch a time being ſo viſibly diſcovered, 'twill make you more ſober and vigilant ever after; and to get on the armour, that you may ſtand againſt all his wiles all his devices.

3. *The Devil may have great wrath, but he hath but a ſhort time*, Rev. 12. 12. He is the more buſie becauſe he is aware that your warfare will ſhortly be at an end; and that the ſpiritual combatants, within a few yeares will be Conquerours and Crowned. Happy thoſe that are above! Devils cannot come at them! they know not what temptation means. 'Tis no more poſſible for any of Satans fiery darts to hit any of the Saints in glory, than for an Arrow that we ſhoot upward into the aire to hit the Sun in the firmament. Now you Saints that are below, will come to be above ſhortly, *Romans* 13. 11. *Your ſalvation growes nearer and nearer every day.*

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The Fifth Doctrine.

Saints are impriſoned that they may be tried.

The Devil, ſayes the text, ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon that *ye may be tried.* The word in the original is πειρασθητε *that ye may be tempted.* Now trial, or temptation is ſometimes taken in a *bad* ſometimes in a *good ſenſe*, and the text may be underſtood either way.

1. *Tryal or temptation may be taken in a bad ſenſe as referred to the Devil.* Certainly he by impriſoning believers deſignes to make them weary of their Lords yoak; he would fain have them murmure and be impatient under reſtraint, and draw them to ſome ſinful compliance, to the wounding of their conſciences for the regaining of their liberty. He endeavours to make them grow diſcontented, & quarrel at the Lords diſpenſations; that their enemies which are vile, and the baſeſt of men ſhould yet proſper, and themſelves in the mean time be expoſed to ſo many hardſhips and inconveniencies notwithſtanding the integrity of their hearts, and

the unblamableneſs of their converſations.

2. *Trial or temptation may be taken in a good ſenſe, as referred to Gods permitting the Saints to be thus exerciſed.* He hath certainly a wiſe, and gracious, and holy end in it. 'Tis true, *God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man*, Jam. 1. 13. And yet 'tis expreſly affirmed that God did tempt *Abraham*, Gen. 20. 1. How ſhall theſe two places be reconciled? I anſwer, That temptation ſpoken of by the Apoſtle *James*, is to be underſtood concerning *drawing away and enticing to wickedneſs*, v. 14. of ch. 1. And thus God tempteth not; he neither infuſeth, nor excites any ſinful inclinations in the heart of man, but ſtrictly forbids ſin, and will ſeverely puniſh it. Thus men are tempted by Satan, and eſpecially by their own luſts. But that temptation ſpoken of by *Moſes*, is as much as *trying or making proof of Abrahams ſincerity*: and thus to tempt, is not at all unbecoming, or inconſiſtent with the Lords holineſſe and goodneſs: and when he ſuffers believers to be impriſoned, 'tis for their tryal that he does it.

Now here I ſhall firſt ſhew, What of the Saints is tryed by impriſonment, and ſufferings of the like nature. Secondly, to

to what end they are thus tryed.

In the first place, *What of the Saints is tryed by imprisonment*, and sufferings of the like nature. First, *their Faith.* Secondly, *their Love.* Thirdly, *their subjection and obedience.*

1. *Their Faith is tryed.* They that can loose what they have for Christ, it argues a full perswasion that Christ is better than their earthly enjoyments, and that they believe there is such a *fulness in him* as can make up all their losses. Such esteem the promises of eternal blessings, exceeding great and precious, who are resolved to embrace them whatever they fling away besides. When in a good Cause we lightly esteem liberty and outward accommodations, it shewes we have that faith *which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. 11. 1. Our faith gives a subsistence to, and mightily realizeth those things which as yet we have only the hopes of enjoying; and makes the great things of another world evident, though not to be seen or possessed till hereafter. Faith is a noble grace, it glorifies God exceedingly; when a man upon the Lords word, will consent to quit all that's near and dear to him, in expectation

of

of a Kingdom and Glory which no man alive ever saw.

2. By imprisonment and other sufferings *Believers Love is tryed.* They who can undervalue Liberty, and livelyhood, and life, for the sake of the Son of God, may boldly say as *Peter* did in another case, *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that we love thee,* 'Tis manifest they love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. But if when the world and Christ stand in competition, we hold to the world, and despise the Lord, certainly our love is but a painted, not a real fire. Love is a Grace of an uniting nature. The History tells us, *That the soul of Jonathan was knit to David, and he loved him as his own soul*: and we find that the displeasure which *Saul* had conceived against *David*, and the danger that *Jonathan* was in, for his affection sake, could not cool, much less quench his love. If we love our Lord, our souls will be knit to him; and troubles will be so far from dissolving the union, that they will cause us to cling the closer, and chasp the faster about him.

3. By imprisonment, and sufferings of the like nature, there is a tryal made of *believers subjection and obedience.* When they will do for God, though presently *suffering*

for

for God follow ; this argues they have learned to deny their own wills, and taken the Word and will of God as their guide and Rule. When they regard the commands of God above the commands of men, are awed by the threatnings of God more than the threats of men, and dread Gods displeasure more than mans anger; this is a demonstration that they have submitted unto Christs Scepter, and that the Promise of the Covenant is fulfilled, *Heb.* 8. 10. *I will put my Lawes into their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

In the second place I am to tell you, *for what end God will have his Saints thus tryed.*

1. *That the truth of their Grace may be evident* ; and great peace must be the concomitant of that evidence. When their gold is tryed in the fire, and glisters the more, shines the brighter, they may be pronounced rich indeed. The man that is rich in the World, *hath no reason to glory in his riches*, for he is but a beggar in comparison.

2. They are tryed *that Satan may be silenced.* He can no longer say that the Saints are mercenary or selfish, when self is thus denyed, when peace of conscience is preferred before the greatest outward peace

and

and prosperity; and so the inheritance above may be secured, they put it to the venture what the world can do to them, or take from them. The Lord may say to Satan (and this accuser of the brethren have nothing to reply) *Hast thou considered my suffering Servants, how perfect and upright they be? They fear God, and eschew evil, though by departing from evil they make themselves a prey.*

3. Believers are tryed, *that God who upholds them may be honoured.* The Lord is with them in the furnace; he keeps them like the Bush in the midst of the flaming fire, unconsumed. He shewes his wisdome and grace, in so tempering the furnace, as that it is both tolerable, and also effectual unto their refining. The Saints have abundant cause readily to acknowledge, that their support in trouble, their benefit by trouble, and their deliverance out of trouble, is wholly to be ascribed unto God: and he is glorified by this, which is so just an acknowledgment.

USE I.

Of Admonition to unsound Professours: Be restless till you are searched and changed so,

ſo, as to have truth in your inward parts; elſe you will never abide the tryal: in the time of temptation, your ſandy foundations will deceive you; *your building will fall, and great will be the fall of it*, Mat. 7. 27.

You will fall away *further from God, more fully into ſin, more deep into hell*; and all theſe falls will be great and dreadful.

1. You that are unſound, in times of tryal wil fall away further from God. Some of you, though never brought quite home, yet have been almoſt perſwaded, have been not far from the Kingdome of Heaven. But all this common work, if you reſt in it, will dye away: when Chriſt puts you upon ſuffering, you will forſake him. *Suffer* is an hard word, who can bear it? And when you leave the Lord, you bid farewel to the Father of mercies; the God of love, and of all grace, the Fountain of living waters, the Prince of peace, the only Saviour. Well may I cry out, Oh how much folly is there in back-ſliding!

2. *You will fall more fouly into ſin.* God may quickly throw the Reins out of his hands upon the neck of corrupted Nature; and whither may you be carryed? Apoſtatizing profeſſors often turn moſt pro-

ſane; they out-run, as to riot & exceſs, the wretchest hat never pretended to Religion. The Conſcience that was once awakened, if it fall aſleep again, ſleeps more ſoundly. The heart that was once reſtrain'd from ſin that reſtraint being gone, is more eager to commit iniquity than before. Nay, 'tis ſomtimes obſerved, that backſliding profeſſors even become cruel perſecutors of thoſe wayes which once were forwardly owned by them. If this be not the unpardonable ſin, I am ſure it comes to the very brink of it.

3. *You will fall more deep into Hell at laſt.* Chriſt tells us that *the laſt end of ſuch is worſe than their beginning*, Mat. 12. 45. and that both as to ſin, and as to puniſhment. How large will be the Vial of wrath to be emptied upon Apoſtates heads? how hot their place in the Lake that burns with fire and brimſtone? Thoſe, that as the Apoſtle ſpeaks *are twice dead, pluckt up by the roots*, Jude 12. The ſecond death will be more terrible to them, they will be eternal fewel to a more furious flame. The ſufferings of the Saints, whether impriſonment, or death, are not worthy to be named the ſame day, with everlaſting confinement to outer darkneſs, and ſuffering in the higheſt degree

degree and fulleſt meaſure eternal damnation. Conſider this ye hypocrites that are rotten at heart, that have God in your mouthes, but he is far from your Reins: On how long will it be ere you attain to uprightneſs!

uSE II.

Of Encouragement to the Saints when they are exerciſed with Tryals.

1. *The Lord hath promiſed to keep you when you are tryed.* He may fan and winnow, but not a grain of corn ſhall fall to the ground ſo as to be loſt. That Scripture is very obſervable, *Rev.* 3. 10. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* He will keep from the hour of temptation, that is, from the prevalency of, and corruption by temptation in that hour. But then you muſt be ſure to keep his Word, which is called the Word of his patience, becauſe it propoſes Chriſt as an example of patience, and layes an injunction upon you to be like him. And if you look upon this word, as your *food*, as your *phyſick*, as your *treaſure*, as your *armour*, as your *heritage*, I hope you will look upon it as well deſerving to be kept by you:

2. *Your tryals will make you to grow in grace.* Grace is of that nature that it increaſes and gathers ſtrength by exerciſe. As the Widdowes Oyl by being drawn out did multiply; ſo Grace is augmented, not diminiſhed, by being uſed. Hark to the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 5. 3,4 5. *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience*; not only tryeth patience, but worketh patience; *and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not aſhamed.* The righteous by tryals and difficulties are not ſtopt as diſcouraged perſons, *but hold on their way*, nay not only hold on, but grow and go ſtronger: *and they that have clean hands ſhall wax ſtronger and ſtronger*, Job 17. 9.

3. *After you have endured tryal, you ſhall be own'd and crown'd*, Jam. 1. 12. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed he ſhall receive the Crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* And that Crown when received will make all pains, and diſgrace, and ſufferings to be forgotten.

The Sixth Doctrine.

The tribulation of Believers will not laſt alwayes; after ten dayes, that is, a ſhort time, a period will be put to it.

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Ye ſhall have tribulation ten dayes. The Holy Ghoſt reckons by *dayes*, not years, and according to the uſual manner, in Scripture, a certain number is put for an uncertain, ten dayes for a few dayes. The Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. calls the troubles of Believers not only *light afflictions*, but affirms they are *but for a moment*; and becauſe they are but for a moment, ſurely much the lighter.

The Arguments to confirm this Doctrine are theſe.

1. One ſhall be drawn *from the deſire in Chriſt the Head to have his members with him.* Therefore they ſhall not long be abſent from him; and when they are with him, no troubles at all ſhall be their companions. Chriſt in the dayes of his fleſh prayed thus, *Joh.* 17. 24. *Father I will that thoſe alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou haſt given me, for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world.* Chriſt is now gone to his father, and he hath prepared Manſions for the Saints, and thoſe Manſions ſhall not be long empty. Believers groan to be cloathed upon with their houſe which is from Heaven; to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord. The

Lord Jesus desires, and hath prayed for their company. Surely it will not be long before those who are so mutually desirous of each other, do come together.

2. A second Argument shall be drawn *from the shortness of the triumph of the Saints adversaries.* God will quickly cut asunder the cords of the wicked, that plow upon *Sions* back, and make long their furrows. *I have seen*, saith *David*, *the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green Bay tree; yet he passed away, and lo he was not, yea I sought him, but he could not be found.* His great power, which he abuses to oppress and trouble, and himself too, shall quickly pass away. All the glory of the ungodly is as a dream, and is chased away as a night vision. And when they are laid in the dust, and death is feeding on them, they can devour the upright no longer. And truly the more violent they are, the shorter oftentimes is their triumph; cruelty doth ripen them apace for vengeance.

3. A Third Argument shall be drawn from *the shortness of the Saints continuance in this vale of tears.* Their tribulation cannot possibly be of any long duration. They are but travellers through the world, and will quickly be at their journeyes end

A few years, nay perhaps a few months will bring them to eternity: and when time is no longer there will be no longer trouble. The thoughts of death, though terrible to the ungodly, as putting a full stop to all their consolation, may be refreshing to the Saints. Death is their *last Enemy*; after death no enemy can molest them. Their dayes are swifter than a Weavers Shuttle; they hast to an end, as the Ships of desire to the Haven, or the Eagle to the prey: and as their dayes post away, so their troubles and distresses make speed to a conclusion.

4. A fourth Argument shall be drawn from the Saints immediate entrance into rest upon their dissolution. The Apostle joyns *being dissolved* and *being with Christ* together; and speaking of believers in the general, he sayes 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have (not we shall have, but we have) a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.* The spirits of just men immediately upon their separation, are made perfect, perfectly free from sin and misery, which while united to the body they were loaded with.

The Papists distinguish the Church into

Triumphantem in cœlis, militantem in terra, laborantem in purgatorio, Triumphant in Heaven, Militant on Earth, Labouring in Purgatory. The laſt member of the Diviſion, labouring in Purgatory, the Scripture no where mentions, but expreſs affirms the contrary, *Rev.* 14. 13. *Bleſſed are the dead that dye in the Lord, from henceforth, yea ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours.*

Several miſerably deluded ſouls argue for perfection here; elſe ſay they how can the Saints be fitted for glory, if they are defiled all their dayes? It is eaſily anſwered, that the work of grace is carryed on all their life time, and at their diſſolution their ſouls are perfected. Death may be called a great change, not only in regard of the body, but in regard of the Soul too, becauſe the ſoul is perfectly purified, and ſin quite and clean aboliſhed. Neither let it ſeem abſurd that ſuch a change ſhould be; for if in the firſt moment of converſion there is an alteration or change from *no grace* to *grace*, ſurely 'tis not unreaſonable to think that at the moment of diſſolution, there ſhould be a change from *imperfect grace* to *grace that is compleat*. Thus the penitent Thiefs ſoul was perfected at his expiring, elſe he could not have been *that day he dyed with Chriſt in Paradiſe*.

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It's plain that the Saints upon their departure hence do enter into rest; therefore it must be granted, that their tribulation is but, as they are, short-liv'd; nay perhaps they may outlive their tribulation, and behold a *lightsome ever-tyde* after a day of darkness and of gloominess. They may live to see the Gospel in esteem, after disgrace, and peace upon *Israel* after trouble.

USE I.

Is the tribulation of the Saints short? *then let not their faith fail*; let it hold out a little longer, and its work will be at an end. Let faith but keep up the Ship but a little while longer in the storm, and it will be safely landed. Leane a few dayes more upon the promises of support and shelter, & you will be past the pikes, and beyond all peril. When you are entred into the City of God, *the door will be shut*; and as you shall come out no more, so no evil shall enter after you, to molest or grieve you.

USE II.

Is the tribulation of the Saints short? *then let not Patience grow weary.* Now Patience indeed is a needful grace, but hereafter there will be no necessity or use of it, because you shall never feel any more burthens. The benefit of affliction, and the

nearness

nearneſs of your reſt, ſhould induce you to bear all with cheerfulneſs; *When you ſee the end of the Lord*, you will confeſs *they are happy that endure*, Jam. 5. 11.

USE III.

Is the tribulation of the Saints ſhort? *Then let their expectation be raiſed.* Yet a little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry, *Heb.* 10. 37. Your Lord will be as an Hart, or young Roe upon the mountains of ſeparation; and when he comes, he will wipe away tears from all faces, and for all your affliction and tribulation, you ſhall have joy and triumph double, treble, nay ten thouſand times ten thouſand fold.

USE IV.

Is the tribulations of the Saints ſhort? *See the difference between the Saints and Sinners.* The Saints ſufferings are like the ſinners eaſe and proſperity, both for a moment. Let not the world imagine believers miſerable; their miſery is no longer then the worlds happineſs: And as the men of the world cannot be counted happy, becauſe their happineſs does ſo ſoon vaniſh; ſo neither can believers juſtly be eſteemed miſerable, becauſe their miſery is ſo tranſient. What is it to have

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tribulation for ten dayes, and then to triumph in the presence of God, and of the Lamb for ever.

The Seventh Doctrine.

Whatsoever sufferings he is exposed to, a Christian must be faithful.

All the children of *Abraham* should resemble their father; of whom it is said, that the Lord *found his heart faithful before him*, Neh. 9. 8. This charge in the text is strict, *Be thou faithful*: And truly 'tis but needful, if these three things are considered.

1. *A Christians heart is treacherous*, and apt to start aside like a deceitful bow. A besieged City, when the besiegers have friends within the walls, that are ready to lay hold of any opportunity to betray it, the Inhabitants had need to be the more circumspect and vigilant. Such a City is the embleme of a believer; though his heart be renewed, yet 'tis only in part, it remains still in part corrupted, and that corruption sides with the tempter, and is ready to yield and open to him. Faithfulness therefore to the Lord, and to himself is often to be pressed upon the Christian.

2. *Shaking*

2. *Shaking temptations are likely to be met with*, Mat. 7. 27. *The rain will descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon the house*, to try whether it is founded on a Rock, or upon the sand onely.

1. This charge to be faithful is very requisite, if we consider, that in time of shaking, *many will take offence, and depart from Christ*. Christians in shew will then discover their want of faith, and love in truth: And when these fall off, the Saints had need to be cautioned. *Do not you also leave me*. That so they may reply with *Peter*, Joh. 6. 67, 68. *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life*; and eternal life it self to bestow on us.

In the further handling of this Doctrine. First, I shall shew what it is to be faithful; Secondly, I shall give good and sufficient reason, why a Christian should be faithful.

In the first place, I am to shew *what it is to be faithful*. This Apostle does briefly, and yet excellently set forth, 1 *Tim.* 1. 18, 19. *This charge I commit unto thee son Timothy, according to the prophesies which went before on thee, that by them thou mightest war*

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a good warfare, holding Faith and a good Conſcience. And in holding theſe, we hold all that is worth our care to ſecure.

The Epithite *Precious* is given to Faith, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To them who have obtained the precious faith with us.* And if you would know how precious, you have it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. Faith is not only ſaid to be as precious as gold, but *much more precious then gold*, nay, *much more precious then gold that periſheth*, therefore 'tis to be held faſt.

Now in holding of Faith theſe five things are implied. We hold faſt; firſt, *the Doctrine*, Secondly, *the Object*. Thirdly, *the Confidence*. Fourthly, *the Life*. Fifthly, *the Profeſſion* of our faith without wavering.

1. He that is faithful, *holds faſt the doctrine of faith.* The truthes of Chriſt he looks upon as worth the buying at any rate: but nothing ſhall make him ſell them. *Buy the truth, and ſell it not*, ſaid wiſe *Solomon*. Truth is of God; a bright and glorious beam, that ſhines from the Sun of righteouſneſs. Truth is a Chriſtians Pilot, his Compaſs; he will quickly ſplit on ſome rock, or ſink in ſome ſand; if this be not heeded the Chriſtian is in a

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dark place, where stumbling blocks and snares are innumerable many: and the truth of Christ, the doctrine of faith is a light unto his feet, and a lamp unto his paths.

The Church of *Pergamus* though they welt where Satans seat was, yet sayes Christ, *Rev.* 2. 13. Thou holdest fast my name, *and hast not decayed my Faith*; that is, *my doctrine*, which I delivered to be believed and obeyed. Rather then the Gospel should be let go, and buried in silence, we must venture all for its propagation. Even *Peace it self*, we are to endeavour after no further then consistent with truth. The Apostle matter'd not what troubles and stir the Gospel occasioned, and though Satan and the ungodly did storm at the light, they boldly did publish that message which they had a command to deliver. Ἐυαγγελίου ζῶντος γαῖα τω μιχθὴ πυρί. As long as the Gospel lives and thrives; no matter what disturbances are created by its enemies.

2. He that is faithful *holds fast the Object of Faith.* Now the Object of faith is laid down; *Joh.* 14. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*, sayes Christ to his Disciples. 'Tis our duty, and our safety to

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cleave unto the onely true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent. A believer keeps his hold of God, who is his ſhield, and exceeding great reward; who can defend him from evil, or turn thoſe evils which he feels, to his advantage, who can crown him with loving kindneſs, and ſuch mercies as are tender, ſutable, ſatisfactory and ſure. Neither will he let go his hold of Jeſus Chriſt who brought him near, and keeps him near unto this God, who guides him by his ſpirit, who by vertue of his blood and interceſſion, is continually making up the breaches that the believers ſinful infirmities do make; and who out of his fulneſs is ready to impart whatever grace in any time of need is neceſſary.

3. He that is faithful *holds faſt his aſſurance and confidence of faith.* After he hath given all diligence to attain aſſurance, he is loth to loſe what coſt him ſuch pains to get. The Apoſtle preſſes this again and again, *Heb.* 3. 6. *But Chriſt as a ſon over his own houſe, whoſe houſe we are,* if we hold faſt the confidence *and rejoycing of hope firm unto the end.* And Heb. 10. 5. *Caſt not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompence of reward.* Aſſurance of faith is a mighty ſupport in the evil day. The eye of faith when

faith

faith is heightned into a full perſwaſion and confidence, will look through the clouds, and behold God ſmiling when men do frown: faith will hear God ſpeaking peace in a ſtill voyce, when the mouths of men are full of threatnings and furious rebukes: Faith will perceive the better ſubſtance enduring, when earthly goods are taken away,

But when troubles on earth ſurround us on every ſide, and we are at uncertainties what will be our lot in the next world: When there are *fightings without*, and in reference to our ſpiritual eſtate, *doubts and fears within*; this will render our condition doleful. Oh therefore labour and pray for aſſurance, cheriſh not any diſtemper of heart, give no place to the Devil, for thus doing will feed your fears, and ſtrengthen your unbelief.

4. He that is faithful *holds faſt the life of faith*. As this is the ſafeſt, ſo 'tis the ſweeteſt life on earth. They that walk by ſight and not by faith, will preſently grow faint and weary in the hour of temptation. If fleſh and blood are conſulted with, if our murmuring and repining ſenſes are heeded, we ſhall refuſe to rowe againſt the ſtream, and be carryed away with the cor-

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ruption of the times we live in. If *Moſes* had been led by ſenſe, his choice and practice would have been contrary to what it was. Senſe would have prized Honour, and ſo he would *have ſtill been called the Son of Pharaohs Daughter.* Senſe would have covered wealth and delight, and ſo he would have had his heart glewed *to the pleaſures of ſin*, and *the treaſures of Egypt.* But *Moſes* walked by faith, and therefore choſe to ſuffer afflictions with the people of God, he eſteemed it part of his riches to be reproached for Chriſt, for faith continually ſhewed *Him that is inviſible* and *the Recompence of reward* to him, Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26, 27.

So the Apoſtle walked by faith, and profeſſeth *Gal.* 2. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* They that live by faith ſtay themſelves upon the promiſes of ſuſtentation, and no weight can ſink them: they caſt their burthens and themſelves too upon the Lord, who being faithful will not ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able.

5. He that is faithful *holds faſt the Pro-*

 feſſion

fession of his faith. He heeds that admoniti-on of the Apostle, *Heb.* 10. 25. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised.* He is not asham'd of his Lord & Master, nay esteems it an honour for his Masters sake to be de-spised. Though the Kings and Rulers of the earth take counsel, and set themselves against the Lords Christ, yet the faithful servant will stick to him. He is not asha-med to be of that way *that is every where spoken against*; He is not ashamed of that Gospel, which is *a stumbling block to the Jewes, to the Greeks foolishness*; he is not ashamed of that word which *a sinful and adulterous Generation reproach, and have no delight in it,* Jer. 6. 10.

His principal care and study indeed is to be a sincere lover, and real practiser of Religion; and yet he is not afraid to be an open professour, though thereby it comes to pass that he is evil entreated by religious enemies. That's the first thing implyed in being faithful, namely *Holding Faith.*

2. To be faithful is also *to hold a good conscience.* When *Paul* stood before the Council, earnestly beholding them he pro-tested, *I have lived in all good conscience before God*

God unto this day, Acts 23. 1. So Acts 24. 16. Herein do I exercise my self, to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. The unstedfast professour regards not his conscience, makes nothing of wounding and defiling it. But the faithful soul speaks much what the same language with holy *Job*, chap. 27. 5, 6. *Till I dye I will not remove my integrity from me; my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go, my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

There are these three things that argue a good conscience.

1. Where the conscience is good, *no sinful designs are carryed on.* Sinister aimes are not allowed by one that is faithful. If his treacherous heart begin to have a squint eye at his own praise or profit, he checks it presently. What he *doth*, he designs that God may have the glory of; and surely the glory is the Lords due, since his strengthening grace doth *all in us, and for us.* And by *suffering*, the faithful man aimes not at the advancing his own repute, but that Christ may be magnified by his tryals, his patience and joy in them. And if the world be convinced, the weak confirmed, if the Gospel get ground, and the Lord Jesus be

by a greater multitude prized and admired, he hath his end.

2. Where the conscience is good, *ungodly desires are not harbour'd*. He that is faithful looks well to his desires, that they be preserved pure. The World is undesirable, sin is abominable, but *his soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*, Psal. 42. 2. and sufferings are willingly undergone, so this thirst may be satisfied.

3. Where conscience is good, 'tis *purged from dead works*, Heb. 9. 14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?* A good conscience will not wink at unwarrantable practises, will not connive at not doing the work of the Lord, or doing that work negligently. He that is faithful makes conscience to walk before God in truth, though never so many in their works deny the Lord: he is grieved and vexed at others filthy conversation, and orders his own aright; and so though for a while he is used hardly, *he comes at length to see the salvation of God*, Psal. 50. ult.

In the second place I am to lay down the Reasons why a Christian should be faithful.

1. *A*

1. *A Christian is under a command to be faithful.* And this command to be stedfast, is very expressive, 'tis very much pressed in Scripture, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Be stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* Phil. 4. 1. *So stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved.* 1 Cor. 16. 13. *Watch ye stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men.* Joh. 8. 31. *Jesus said unto them that believed on him; if ye continue in my word, then are ye my Disciples indeed.* *Moses* likewise of old, did harp upon this string; commanding the children of *Israel* not only to turn, but to cleave unto the Lord, Deut. 30. 20. *That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and obey his voice, and cleave unto him, for he is thy life.* And they are forbid to turn either to the right hand, or the left from following the Lord their God. Now all these commandsmake the Christians obligation to faithfulness the stronger: and truly to be unfaithful is not a single sin, for he that leaves the Lord, how fearfully must he be drawn into transgression.

2. *A Christian is under covenant to be faithful.* Deut. 26. 17. He has avouched the Lord to be his God. He was given up to God betimes, and how often has he made of

himself a fresh resignation, upon dayes of humiliation? and when he has eat and drunk at the Lords table, his covenant to be the Lords has been renewed. How often has the Christian professed, that his heart and members were not his own but Gods, to dwell in, and to make use of? this is another reason, and a strong one why he should be faithful. The Lord is the Christians, and the Christian is the Lords portion. *The Lords portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* Now Gods inheritance should be for his use, and should in no wise be alienated.

3. *The God of believers is faithful, therefore they shall resemble him.* The Scripture speaks in a glorious strain concerning the faithfulness of God: He is said to keep truth for ever. The hills and mountains stand not so firm as his covenant shall. *Isa.* 54.10. *For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* Nay the Scripture goes much higher then the Mountains, in setting forth this faithfulness, *I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever: Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very Heavens.* And being thus established

bliſhed, nothing on earth can ſhake their faithfulneſs, 'twill be as apparent and illuſtrious as the Heavens are: The Ordinances of Heaven, as the Sun by day, and of the Moon and Stars by night, are not more unalterable than the Lords Covenant, *Jer.* 31. 33, 34. 35, 36.

4. *The Lord is glorified by a Chriſtians proving faithful.* It reflects diſhonour upon him when his Servants leave him. Oh then how faithful ſhould they be? The worlds prejudices againſt the Lords ſervice are heightned, and they are hardned in their ſtubborn and evil way, when they behold profeſſours apoſtatize, and become again their companions in the paths of folly and wickedneſs. But the faithful man cauſes the way of truth to be well ſpoken of; by his faithfulneſs he proclaims his Maſters *goodneſs* and his *power*, and both wayes is his Maſter glorified.

1. *He proclaims his Maſters goodneſs*, and that he hath made the beſt choyce, ſince he will ſuffer any thing rather than part with his Lord. The *Iſraelitiſh* ſervant that refuſed to go out free at the year of releaſe, and had his ear boared through with an Awl, 'twas a plain demonſtration of his Maſters kindneſs, ſince liberty was not ſo

much esteemed as his service. And so when we are unmovable in our Lords work, we tell the World that our Master is exceeding gracious; and who knows but that by this means the number of his servants may be increased?

2. The man that's faithful *proclaims his Lords power.* The power of Christ doth rest upon him, else he would be unstable as water, who through Christ strengthening of him is like the very Rock unshaken; and the more weak the Believer is, the more glorious is his power in whom he believes.

USE I.

Of Reproof, and I shall direct it to two sorts of persons.

1. *The fickle and unconstant are to be reproved.* Their spirit is unstedfast with the Lord, if the World make proffer of its good things, or threaten them with evil. Vain hopes draw them away, vain fears drive them away from Christ. Somtimes they seem to be *his humble Servants*; but this is only an hypocritical kind of complement; Self they are resolved to serve, to please, and to secure, whatever become of Christ, his Honour, and his Gospel.

2. *They are to be reproved that are in an ill*

sense

ſenſe faithful; Faithful to their ſins, which are the worſt maſters; unmoveable in their reſolution to make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof. There is a ſtrange ſtouteneſs of ſpirit, and fixedneſs in evil, that is to be found in thouſands: *Their neck is like an iron ſinew, their brow like braſs; they make their faces harder then a rock, they refuſe to return.* Say what we will, ſin is their maſter, and ſin they will ſerve, though they be told an hundred and an hundred times that *death is its wages.* They are as unchangeable in evil as the ſpots of the Leopard, or the blackneſs of the Ethiopian. Oh that we would learn of ſins vaſſals, to be as faithful to the beſt, as they are to the worſt Lord.

USE II.

Of Exhortation. Let me preſs you to be faithful.

1. *How many obligations lye upon you to be ſtedfaſt?* infinite millions of encouragements he gives you: the more conſtant, the more comfort and peace is found. *Great peace have they, ſayes David, that love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* Every mercy of theſe many thouſands you receive, ſhould be a cord to tye you faſter unto

unto God; and what ſtrange kind of hearts have you, if ſo many cords are ſnapt aſunder, and ſo many obligations are forgotten.

2. *Whom do you leave when you are unfaithful?* you forſake that Lord whoſe loving kindneſs is ſo excellent, who is able to perform all things for you, whoſe all-ſufficiency can furniſh you though never ſo indigent. This God you leave, and for what do you leave him? 'Tis for that which is not bread? 'Tis for that *which can never ſatisfie, Iſa.* 55. 2.

3. By unfaithfulneſs you not only deprive your ſelves of the Lords goodneſs, *but engage him againſt you*, Ezra 8. 22. *His hand is upon all them for good that ſeek him, but his power and his wrath is againſt thoſe that forſake him.* And wrath armed with ſuch power is dreadful. God greatly abhors the backſlider: when his ancient people *turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers*, 'tis ſaid, *When the Lord heard this he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Iſrael*, Pſal. 78. 57, 59.

4. *If you are faithful with God, you ſhall find by experience his ways to be truth and mercy*, Pſal. 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto ſuch as keep*

his

his covenant and his testimonies. His promises you shall experience to be true; his mercies will all *in mercy* be proved; Nay there will be mercy in every affliction, in every distress, mercy supporting, mercy reviving, mercy turning all things to the best: As the Philosophers stone is said to turn all mettals into gold.

USE III.

Of direction how to be made faithful.

1. *Be sensible of the treachery of your own spirits*, and let this make you the more jealous of your selves all your dayes. *Watch ye, stand fast*, sayes the Apostle. If you would stand fast you must be exceeding vigilant. Watch that nothing come in at the door of your senses, which may prove a snare; and that nothing go out of your heart which may defile you. When first the heart begins to grow weary of well-doing, or to hearken to the tempter, observe it, and being apprehensive of your danger, cry to be quickned and established.

2. *Pray to be upheld by the spirit of the Lord.* Thus did *David*, Psal. 51. 12.

Re-

Reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation, and uphold me with thy free ſpirit. Where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, life, holineſs, ſtrength. Grieve not the ſpirit, but be obſequious to him, and he will ſtrengthen you with might in your inward man. When Chriſt was about to go away, and part with his Diſciples, he promiſes to ſend the ſpirit who ſhould abide with them for ever; and 'twas by this ſpirit that they were born up and carried thorow all their work, and the difficulties that attended it.

3. *Plead the Covenant*, one clauſe whereof is this: *I will not turn away from them to do them good, and I will put my fear into their hearts that they ſhall not depart from me*, Jer. 32. 40. Again he ſaith, Jer. 3. 19. *Thou ſhalt call me my Father, and ſhalt not depart from me.* Prize theſe promiſes, plead them, believe them, and as ſure as God is faithful, he *will make you faithful whatever your ſufferings or temptations be.*

The Eighth Doctrine.

A Chriſtians faithfulneſs muſt run parallel with his life, to the death he muſt be ſtedfaſt.

This

This *ἄχρι θανάτου to the death*, may have a double interpretation.

1. Be thou faithful to the death, that is, *be thou unmovable, though it coſt thee thy life to be ſo.* Prefer not thy life before that Lord who laid down his life to redeem thee from death, and who will recompence the loſs of life temporal with that life that's everlaſting. *A Chriſtian is to reſiſt even unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks; he muſt chooſe rather to part with his blood, than to loſe his God.

2. Be faithful to the death, that is, *all thy dayes be faithful*; that when death comes, and the Lord by death, he may find thee doing his work, doubling his talents, ſtanding up for his intereſt, notwithſtanding all deriſion and oppoſition.

The Reaſons why we ſhould be faithful to the death are theſe.

1. *Much of the former part of our life hath been loſt; therefore all the remainder ſhould be the more faithfully devoted to God.* The time paſt of our life may more than ſuffice to have diſhonoured him; therefore all the *reſt of our time in the fleſh, ſhould be lived, not to the luſts of men* (either our own luſts, or the luſts of others) *but to the will of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 2, 3. The whole was his due, let him

him not be denyed that part which is behind.

2. *The longer we know our Lord, and the closer we keep to him, the better we shall like him*; therefore 'tis but reason that to the last we should be stedfast. *Cardinal Wolsey* indeed was weary of the service of King *Henry* the Eighth, and said, *If he had served God so faithfully as he had done the King, God would not have forsaken him in his gray hairs.* But Christ is another kind of Master than any other Potentate. *Old Polycarpus* said, *he had served Christ for several Scores of years, and knew nothing but good by him*, and therefore in his old age he chose to suffer any thing rather than deny him. The harder we follow after Christ, and the longer we continue his disciples, we discover new beauties, new pleasures, new treasures, and so we can never find just reason to exchange, since 'twill be so much for the worse; but just reason to the contrary, since Christs lovliness, and fulness, and liberality in communicating of that fulness, doth daily more and more abundantly appear.

3. *If we are not faithful to the death, all that we have done before will be lost*; we shall lose those things which we have wrought, and miss of our reward. That's a full place,

Ezek.

Ezek. 18. 24. *But when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin which he hath sinned, in them shall he dye.* By the righteous man we are to understand one that by profession is righteous, and outwardly unblamable, performing the duties required of him; if he give out and turn aside, all his duties will be lost, all his hearing, all his prayers, all his deeds of justice and mercy will not be mention'd; he continues not stedfast, which shews he was never sincere, however others were deceived in him, and himself too.

USE.

The only Use of this Doctrine shall be *to admonish all that profess the name of Christ, to persevere to the end.* Depart from iniquity, but never from your Lord. When first you give up your selves to Christ, reckon upon this, that you must ever abide with him. Your closing with Christ is a matriage, and this Husband never dies, you must not give away your selves to another. The Arguments to perswade you to be faithful till death are these. 1. *Many*

1. *Many unfaithful ones at death tremble and are in horrour because of their Apostacy.* Conscience often awakes when the King of terrours is within view: a dreadful sound is in the backsliders ears, trouble and anguish make him afraid and prevail against him, as a King ready to the Battel. To have ones spirit wounded with an intollerable stroke, to have the Devils accusing, the creatures all failing, sins set in order before the eyes, calamity as a storm ready to hurl one out of the world, and God so far from pitying as to laugh at ones destruction, and *to be comforted in the vengeance that is inflicted*, Ezek. 5. 13. must needs be very dreadful: But this is the doleful ease & conclusion of many backsliders.

2. *Death is near at hand, think not much of so short a time to be faithful.* If a Master should say, *Work hard to day, and I will give thee an inheritance for thy life*, verily the most slothful would not think much of the heat and burthen. Now God sayes, abide in my service for a little while, and then you shall rest from all your labours and sufferings, and that rest shall be for ever. Oh how should this encourage!

3. *Faithfulness to the death will take away the fear of death.* Death will be look upon

a Messenger to tell you that your Lord can no longer brook your absence, to tell you that your warfare is accomplished; and that having been faithful in your Masters business you must enter into your Masters joy. Be but faithful unto death, and Christ will stand by you at death; and after death he will receive you.

The Ninth Doctrine.

Upon those that continue faithful unto death, Christ will certainly bestow a Crown of Life and Immortality upon you.

If the eye of *Faith* were but more open and strong-sighted, how would this Crown glister and shine? What a vehement inducement would it prove to perseverance?

In the handling of this Doctrine, I shall first endeavour to shew, what, and what manner of life the text speakes of. Secondly, in what regard this life is called a Crown. Thirdly, lay down some arguments to prove the certainty of the certainty of the doctrine, that the faithful shall be thus crown'd with immortality, then close with the uses.

In the first place I am to shew what, and what manner of life the text speakes of. A subject I confess, more fit for an

Angels tongue then mine. The ſoul while impriſoned in the body is of a narrow capacity, and apprehends but little of that glory which is above. The actual inhabitants of the new *Jeruſalem*, can beſt tell what kinde of habitation it is. They that are but paſſing through the wilderneſs of this world, know but little what manner of life is lead in the heavenly *Canaan*; yet ſince we have a Map of this bleſſed land of promiſe, in the word: let us take a view of it, and let us view ſo long, till we cry with *Auguſtines* mother, *Quid hic facimus?* What do we here? and groan with pangs of deſire to be gone from hence and poſſeſſed of our heavenly country. Now what the word ſpeaks of *this life above*, in theſe particulars I ſhall declare.

1. That life above, *will conſiſt in the neareſt union and conjunction to God.* Life natural is the reſult of union between the ſoul and body: and life eternal, of the union between the ſoul and God. And truly to be baniſhed and ſeparated from the Lord for ever, will be the ſecond death. The Apoſtle comforts the *Theſſalonians* with this, Chap. 4. Epiſt. 2. v. 17. *So ſhall we ever be with the Lord.* How near their God will the Saints be admitted hereafter? His dwel-

dwelling in them is comparatively called an *Abſence*, in reſpect of that preſence in the other world to be vouchſafed. Theſe three things will be conſequent upon this union to God.

1. *One will be the viſion or ſeeing of God*, ſayes the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I ſhall know even as alſo I am known.* The Saints ſhall no longer complain of darkneſs, of ignorance, of thoſe *horribiles dubitationes* as *Melanchon* calls them, horrible doubtings concerning God, with which they are ſometimes haunted. They ſhall ſee God immediately, and what they behold how will it raiſe their love, and joy, and wonder! The Lord ſaid to *Moſes*, *Thou canſt not ſee my face and live*, q. d. Such a ſight would be ſo glorious as that thy fraile nature would be overwhelmed by it. But the perfected Saints are ſtrengthened for ſuch a felicity, their life lies in looking and gazing at him; whoſe glory ſhould it but ſhine forth, would overwhelm the moſt ſanctified mortal here on earth.

And when the face of God is ſeen, the ſoul is *all light, all love*. All the excellencies and beauties in the creatures whereby affection is attracted, in compariſon of

Face

what is to be ſeen in God, are not ſo much as the thouſandth part of the leaſt ſpark of fire, compared with the Sun when it ſhines in its greateſt ſtrength and noon-tide glory. The face of God will then be ſmooth, not one frown to be ſeen, not one look that will manifeſt the leaſt diſpleaſure. Nothing but ſmiles and glorious aſpects, which will evidently ſhew the incomprehenſible greatneſs of his love unto, and joy that he takes in, the perfectly purified veſſels of glory.

2. Another conſequent of this union to God will be likeneſs to him. *But as for me,* ſayes David, *I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs; I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs,* Pſal. 17. 15. The ſight of God will be transforming, and that likeneſs will cauſe abundant ſatisfaction. The beholding of the Lord in his ordinances, does in a degree, *change us into the ſame image from glory to glory,* 2 Cor. 3. ult. and much more the beholding of him in his kingdom, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* Then the Image of God begun here will be compleated. Here 'tis but like a rude draught, like a picture in

dead

dead colours; but then the piece will have had Gods laſt hand upon it, the work will be finiſhed; and Oh how exactly like will all the children be to their holy and heavenly Father? Now they hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; but then the promiſe of filling them will be fulfilled and performed to the uttermoſt.

3. Another conſequent of this union to God, *will be the full enjoyment of him.* The Saints pant after the Lord now, as the chaſed Hart after the water-brooks; but in glory they ſhall have as much of God as they can deſire, or contain, The holy Ghoſt tells us that God *will be all in all*, 1 Cor. 15. 28. All that they can wiſh, all ſufficient to fill them to the brim. The goodneſs, and power, and faithfulneſs, and love of God, have ſometimes deep and ſweet impreſſions on the Saints *now*: But whot will the impreſſions *then* be? how durable, how tranſporting? they ſhall lye as it were, with their heads at the fountain of living waters perpetually; no thirſt, no ſcantineſs will be complained of. Theſe are the conſequents of that near union and communion to God, wherein this life above will conſiſt.

2. That life above will *be moſt holy and unſpotted.* Sin will be pardoned, and quite

and clean abolished. *Filia devorabit Matrem*, Death the daughter will put an end to sin the mother. Believers though alive by grace, do carry a body of death about with them, which makes the condition somewhat like theirs who fell into the hands of the Tyrant of old called *Mezentius*, who

—*Mortua jungebat corpora vivis*
Componens manibusque manus, atq. oribus ora. Virg.

joyned the members of a living man to a dead carkass, the hands, and breast, and face of the one, to those of the other. But when the Saints are come to glory, the body of death will be killed, though the natural body will be raised, yet the body of sin will never have a resurrection. Instead of, *Oh wretched! who shall deliver us?* will be, *glory and everlasting praise to him who hath made us free from sin, the worst of evils, and from all the lesser miseries that attend it!* The Spouse of Christ *will then be presented a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but 'twill be holy and without blemish*, Eph. 5. 27. Then the blood of Christ will have had its perfect operation. The Saints will be washed white as Snow, they will look as white, or whiter then *Adam* did in innocency. All spots will be done

done off. Every wrinkle will be ſmoothed, and the members every one of them, like their head; *altogether lovely*. The Church is *now fair as the Moon*, ſpots it hath with its fairneſs, ſometimes it waxes, ſometimes it wanes; but when 'tis tranſlated to heaven 'twill be clear as the Sun it ſelf, Cant. 6. 10.

3. That life above will *be moſt ſweet and pleaſant*. The Saints ſhall no longer cry out vanity and vexation of ſpirit; as they did when under the Sun. *But God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain, for the former things be paſt away.* Rev. 21. 4. When they come to live in the preſence of God, their Joy will be ſo full, as to be unſuppoſe able of any addition, when they are at Gods right hand, their pleaſures will be for ever. Even in this vail of tears there is a peace attended which paſſes all underſtanding, a joy that is unſpeakable and full of glory. So that the Saints mouthes are full of ſongs in the houſe of their pilgrimage. Oh then how ſhort and unſuitable are our apprehenſions of the pleaſures dealt forth in the heavenly paradiſe!

4. That life above will *be moſt ſecure and ſafe*. Dangers will then be all gone thorow.

When we are entring into the gate of the New *Jeruſalem*, we ſhall ſhake hands with all the enemies that before moleſted us, and not ſo much as one of them will be able to follow us. The great gulph between us and them, will keep them off at an everlaſting diſtance. There will be no danger, either from within, or from without. No ſerpent in that paradiſe to tempt man again to fall from his reſtored innocency. The heart will confirmed in goodneſs, 'twil never have the leaſt inclination to decline from God: There will be no need of that vigilancy and ſtanding upon our guard, that now is neceſſary; for our hearts will be perfectly cured of their deceitfulneſs, and there will be no adverſaries to lay ſnares for us.

5. That life above *will be moſt quiet and peaceable.* 'Tis not improbable that in the latter dayes there will be a more peaceable Church ſtate, than as yet there hath been; when that promiſe, and others of the like nature, will be more viſibly accompliſhed, *Iſa.* 11. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *The Branch of Jeſſe with righteouſneſs ſhall judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: he ſhall ſmite the earth with the Rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips ſhall he ſlay the wicked; and righteouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his*

loyns

loyns, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins. The Wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lye down with the Kid; and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, & a little Child ſhall lead them. And the ſucking Child ſhall play on the hole of the Aſp, and the weaned Child ſhall put his hand on the Cockatrice Den: They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy Mountain. But moſt certainly this peace and concord ſhall be among the Saints above; no biting, no devouring one another, no diverſity of judgments, but all will agree in the ſame truth; no alienation of affection, for love to the Lord, and to one another will be perfect; the ſpirit that luſteth to envy will be caſt out, ſelfiſh ends will carry none aſide, diſputes will be at an end, the wounds which diviſions have made will be cloſed. How good and pleaſant will be that unity, when all the Saints will be of one, & of the right mind.

6. The life above *will be lead among the moſt ſuitable ſociety.* The Saints will then have bid farewel to *Meſhech* and the Tents of *Kedar*; they ſhall no longer dwell among revilers at holineſs, the openly prophane, the ſcandalous or lifeleſs profeſſors of Religion; no filthy communication or converſation in heaven to vex their righteous ſouls; no contempt of God, no provoking

voking the eyes of his glory; no curſing, ſwearing, pride, wantonneſs, to be heard or ſeen in the heavenly City. When they come thither, they will ſay, *How bleſſedly unlike is this, to that place and company which we came from.* Glorified ſpirits, innumerable companies of Angels will be their companions, theſe will be glad to ſee them ſafely arrived unto reſt: For if there be joy in heaven at the converſion of a ſinner, we may very well infer, there will be joy likewiſe at the Saints Coronation.

7. That life above *will fully anſwer its end.* The Saints were formed by the Lord for himſelf, and they will be eternally ſhewing forth his praiſe and glory. They will never entertain ſo much as an unbecoming thought of God; but to magnifie and extol him will be their everlaſting buſineſs; their hearts and their Harpes will be ever in tune to ſound forth his Name. Now they do but liſp and ſtammer out his praiſes; but then how ſeraphical will their Songs be? and they will never be weary of ſinging *Hallelujahs.* Oh what extaſies of joy and love; with what raviſhment of ſpirit, with what unconceivable raptures of delight, will the whole Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born joyn together, ſaying, *Amen, bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdome,*

and

and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen, Rev. 7. 12. The triumphant Saints will perfectly answer the design of God, in their Creation, in their new Creation; they will glorifie him for ever, who upon them hath bestowed eternal Glory.

8. The life above *will be an everlasting life.* Death it self will be destroyed and swallowed up in victory. The eternity of the Saints joyes and enjoyments, makes them infinitely of the greater value. Heaven would be no longer Heaven, were they ever to be turned out of it; all the sweetness would be imbittered with the thoughts of its period. But adored be the riches of mercy, the inheritance is said to be *incorruptible,* the Kingdome *cannot be moved,* the Crown of glory *fadeth not away*; *the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,* Rom. 6. ult.

Howl ye damned spirits, your miseries are everlasting, you are banished from God, and shall never be called back; but be unconsumed fewel for unquenchable flames. Triumph and rejoyce ye glorified Souls: As long as God *is,* he will be *your* God, your portion, your reward; as long as God is, you shall live in his presence, and enjoy him. Thus you see what,

&

& what manner of life the Text ſpeaks of.

In the ſecond place I am to ſhew upon what ſcore this Life is called a Crown.

1. This Crown intimates *that the Saints are Conquerours.* They have run the Race, and won the prize; they have fought the good fight of Faith, and laid hold on eternal life. They may truly ſay *ſuper-ſuperamus*, we are more than conquerours. They have, being ſtrengthned by him that loveth them, conquered the whole World, conquered the Principallities and Powers of Hell, conquered themſelves too, their own luſts, and paſſions, and affections. All other Battels are but petty skirmiſhes to the ſpiritual combate; mortal men are but inconſiderable enemies compared with fleſhly luſts and evil Angels. All the Conquerours recorded in Hiſtory are hardly worth the mentioning with a Chriſtian that endures and overcomes. And what is Lawrel to that Crown at laſt put upon the Chriſtians Head?

2. This Crown ſpeaks *the honour and dignity whereunto the Saints are advanced.* Though exceedingly filled with contempt and the ſcorning of thoſe that are at eaſe, yet even here the Saints are *Kings & Prieſts*, Rev. 1. 5, 6. *Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made*

made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. And when they come to Glory they are actually crown'd; then 'tis evident the World was not worthy of them, and that far better than what the world could bestow, is freely given them. Heaven is called a *Kingdome*, the Reward a *Crown*, to shew 'tis no mean prize the Christian aimes at. What is all the height and grandeur on earth to the Kingly dignity put upon believers? What are all the Kingdomes of the world, and the glory of them, to reigning with the Lord for ever? The four great Monarchies by the Holy Ghost are compared unto *four great Beasts*, Dan. 7. 3. Surely earthly Crowns are but base and sordid to the heavenly.

3. This expression, *a Crown of life*, is used to shew *that the Crown fades not*, will never be less bright for wearing, 'twill never be thrown off, 'tis a *living Crown*, a Crown of immortality.

In the next place follow the Arguments to prove the Doctrine, that the Saints shall be thus Crowned; and they are these.

1. One shall be drawn *from the Fathers good pleasure.* This good pleasure Christ declares to the little flocks encouragement, *Luk.* 12. 32. *Fear not little Flock, 'tis your Fathers*

Fathers good pleaſure to give you the Kingdome: And this his counſel is immutable, he will do this his pleaſure. This pleaſure he hath plainly ſignified in his Covenant and Promiſes, wherein *Glory* as well as *Grace* is aſſured: and hereby he hath heightned believers hopes and expectations; and certainly to truſtrate them is not conſiſtent with his truth and goodneſs.

2. A ſecond Argument ſhall be drawn from *Chriſts purchaſe*; He hath *purchaſed that poſſeſſion* for his Saints in the next world; he hath bought that Crown by his Croſs. In the New Teſtament the Lord Jeſus hath bequeathed life to them, and *by the Death of Himſelf the Teſtatour, this Teſtament is confirmed*, Heb. 9. 16. So that this Life is as ſure, as 'tis ſure our Lord dyed.

3. A third Argument ſhall be drawn *from Chriſts entring into life, and taking poſſeſſion of the Kingdome.* He liveth, and was dead, and behold he is alive for evermore: He is ſet down with his Father in his Throne, and is gone thither partly to this end, that he might fit Crowns and prepare Manſions for his perſevering followers, *Joh.* 14. 2.

4. A fourth Argument ſhall be drawn *from the foretaſts of this glorious life that at preſent are vouchſafed.* Life ſpiritual is Life eternal in the Bud, and the Bud will at

length be fully blown. In Ordinances an heaven upon earth is ſomtimes enjoyed. Oh then how are the things unſeen made evident! When faith and ſpiritual ſenſe and experience go together, then there is that which the Apoſtle calls *a full aſſurance of underſtanding*, Col. 2. 2.

5. A fifth Argument ſhall be drawn *from the earneſt of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. 13, 14. *In whom after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance until the Redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion to the praiſe of his Glory.* And in other places we read of the *earneſt of the Spirit*. The Spirit of wiſdome and revelation makes the Saints know what is the hope of their Calling, and what the riches of their glorious inheritance. And the Lord gives his Spirit, not only to reveal this to them, but as an earneſt and pledge to aſſure them of it, and that after they are made meet to be partakers of the life and glory which he hath promiſed, they ſhall uudoubtedly enjoy it. I come at laſt to the Uſes.

USE I.

Of Inſtruction. We may learn the woful condition of the ungodly: a Crown there is, but not for them; a glorious life above, but they ſhall dye the everlaſting death. By the ungodly I mean they that allow themſelves

ſelves in ſin, which the Word and Conſcience tels them they ought to caſt away. Not only the open unbeliever, but the ſecret hypocrite is concerned, who is an unbeliever as well as the other. When theſe do read of Heavens joyes, it ſhould fill them with ſorrow to conſider, that their *triumph will be but ſhort, and their joy will laſt but for a moment*, Job 20. 5. There are theſe Five things that will exceedingly aggravate the loſs of life to the ungodly.

1. *This life was proffer'd often to the ungodly in the Goſpel.* The Fountain of living waters was not a Fountain ſealed, but 'twas ſet open; and yet this Fountain was forſaken for the ſake of broken Ciſterns. The Spirit and the Bride ſay *come*, the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſay *come*, and the ſinners preſſing neceſſity and want ſayes *Go*, and drink of the waters of life, ſince thou mayeſt do it *freely*, Rev. 22. 17. and yet he refuſeth to accept the invitation. Pardon goes as it were a begging, and Glory a begging in the Goſpel, and yet neither are accepted, though offered upon terms moſt juſt and reaſonable. Oh how will it torture the damned to reflect upon this, that *they would not come to Chriſt*, though life was aſſured upon their coming, *Joh.* 5. 40.

2. 'Twill heighten the miſery of undone ſinners

ſinners *to conſider what they preferr'd before this Crown of life.* Oh where were their wits, when ſin was cheriſhed in their hearts, while Chriſt ſtood at the door? When the world that is ſo empty, ſo unſtable, ſo enſnaring, was lookt upon as a better inheritance then that which is incorruptible.

3. *Some that periſh, have been not far from the kingdom.* The ſpirit of God hath ſtriven; their own ſpirits have been ſtartled, and almoſt perſwaded to turn indeed; and if they had done ſo, they would have *lived*; this crown had been their own: But ſome ſin or other was a cord to hold them faſt; ſome command wherein ſuffering, ſelf-denial, ſtrictneſs is enjoyned, made them firſt demur, then conſulting with fleſh and blood, to take offence at Chriſt, and ſo away. And 'tis an hightning of miſery, to have been near to happineſs, & through our own fault and folly to have miſs't of it.

4. The ungodly hereafter *will have other apprehenſions of this crown which they have ſlighted.* When they ſee the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and Saints in the Kingdom, and do perceive what a luſtre their crowns have; what bliſs, and glory is their portion; Oh how will they grow mad

mad at themſelves for grief and vexation, that they were ſo ſottiſhly ignorant, to contemn ſuch a treaſure.

5. *Deſpair of ever gaining that Crown of Life will ſeize upon them.* Now there is hope, but hereafter the door of heaven, and the door of hope too will be ſhut, and never open'd more. No prayers will be heard, no tears will move compaſſion. Chriſt the giver of life will ſay, *depart ye curſed:* and the invitation to come to him will be heard no more for ever. How will deſperation torture them, when they conſider what they have loſt, and how their loſs is irreparable: Fools they lived, and fools they dyed, and then after-wiſdom cannot at all avail them.

Bring theſe things to mind, conſider and ſhew your ſelves men, O ye tranſgreſſours. When life and death were ſet before you, why ſhould death as the beſt of the two be choſen?

USE II.

Of Examination. It highly concerns all to examine whether they have a right to this Crown of life, or no? Moſt expect it, but moſt will be aſhamed of their ungrounded hope and expectation. To help you againſt deceiving your own ſouls in this ſelf-examination, I ſhall deſcribe thoſe that

that have a title to this Crown, that are indeed the heirs of life: by these ensuing characters.

1. They who have a right to the Crown of life, *are believers on the Son of God, Joh. 3. ult. He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life* What is it to believe on Christ? *'Tis to recieve him as he is offered in the Gospel* How is Christ offered in the Gospel? *As a Prince, and as a Saviour.* Christ cannot be received as a Prince, but the dominion of sin must be pulled down. He cannot be received as a Saviour, but our own righteousness and strength must be look't upon as insufficient and unavaluable to salvation. He that thus hath accepted the Son, hath life by him, 1 Joh. 5. 11. *This is the record that God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son,* seek it elsewhere, & you will never find it.

2. They who are heirs to the Crown of life, *are quickned by the Spirit.* 'Tis the Spirit that quickens, Joh. 6. 63. Sometime they were dead in trespasses and sins; but God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved them, did quicken them by the holy Ghost, *Eph.* 2. 4 They are alive to God: his spirit dwels in them, they breathe after him, they walk in his wayes; they do his work, they aim at

his glory. And this life ſpiritual is the fore-runner of, and preparative to that which is eternal.

3. They who are heirs to the Crown of life, *diligently hearken to the word of God*, they are willing to be reproved for ſin, to be inſtructed concerning duty; they hear, they keep the word as well as hear it, Prov. 10. 17. *He is in the way of life that keepeth inſtruction.* So Prov. 6. 23. *For the commandment is a Lamp, and the Law is light, and the reproofs of inſtruction is the way of life.* The word of God hath not only a convincing and a converting, and an edifying power, but 'twill put the crown at laſt upon the head of the faithful: therefore the Apoſtle affirms it, *able to give the inheritance*, Act. 20. 32. *And now Brethren I commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.*

4. They who are Heirs to the Crown of Life, *do mortifie the deeds of the body*; by the Spirits help they do it, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall dye; but if ye through the ſpirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.* The Heirs of life are weary of the body of ſin and death; therefore they crucifie the fleſh with the affections and luſts of it. *They mortifie their members on earth, forni-*

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cation, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, & covetouſneſs which is idolatry, Col. 3. 5. Every ſin that they ſee, they look upon with an eye of griet and hatred, and ſtrike at it.

5. They who are heirs to the Crown of Life *have their fruit unto holineſs*, Rom. 6. 22. *But now being made free from ſin, and become the ſervants of God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life. The pure in heart ſhall ſee the Lord*, Mat. 5. 8. his back parts now, his face in glory. And truly the holy are only fit to behold the Holy One. Art thou an enemy to holineſs? Thou art an enemy to thy own life. The heirs of life underſtand that *Jeruſalem* above is an holy City; *therefore they apply & plead the promiſe of ſanctification; they cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh & ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

6. They who are heirs to the Crown of Life *perſevere to the end*; they are faithful to the death, as the Text ſpeaks; they hold faſt what they have, that none may take their Crown away: they not only begin, but finiſh their courſe, and keep the faith, and ſo they receive a Crown of righteouſneſs at the hand of the Lord, the righteous Judge.

USE III.

Suffer I beſeech you a few words [*Exhortation*

hortation, and I ſhall conclude with them.

1. Let the ſerious and believing conſideration of this Crown of life *enliven and quicken you to every duty*. Art thou heating for a Crown, and praying for a Crown, and wilt thou hear careleſly, and pray coldly? Doth not ſuch a Kingdom as heaven is, deſerve thou ſhouldſt uſe an holy violence to take it? what, ſlothful and dead when ſuch glory is in view? Oh ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, that when thou ſeekeſt to enter in at Heavens door, and cryeſt *Lord, Lord, open to me*, entrance may not be denyed.

2. Let this Crown of life be made uſe of *to ſilence Satan, & to fence thee againſt temptation*. When the Devil tells thee of eaſe and gain and pleaſure, which ſin will afford, reply, *Come O thou lying and deceitful ſpirit, put thy eaſe and gain and pleaſure into one Ballance, of the Sanctuary, and I will put the Crown of life and glory into the other, and what is* ſinful eaſe to the Saints reſt? or the gain of gold, to the Saints glory? or pleaſures for a moment, to eternal rejoycing? Satan will not know what to ſay to this, but perceiving unlikelyhood of prevailing will flee from you.

3. Let this crown of Life *looſen your hearts from the world*. Do not defile and load your

your ſelves with thick clay, do not ſtick faſt therein, when ſuch glory is ſo certain and near at hand. Be not deſirous of, nor content with a portion in this life, ſince you are juſt entring upon a better. Live as ſtrangers and pilgrims on earth, & declare plainly that you ſeek a better country then the world hath any.

4. Let this crown of Life, *ſteel your hearts againſt ſufferings*. Fear not what enemies can do, ſince the keyes of heaven hang not at their girdle, nor glory is given at their pleaſure. Our Lord *ſet the joy before him, ſo he endured the croſs and deſpiſed the ſhame*, Heb. 12. 2. and if you imitate him, you ſhall at length ſit down where he is at the right hand of the throne of God.

5. Let this crown of life, *ſet you above the fear of diſſolution*; it cannot be enjoyed till you are gone from hence, you muſt dye before you can live the life above. Let your death be natural or violent, you muſt not be ſtartled or amazed. The Angels are ready to do their office, to convey you to paradiſe: Chriſts arms are open to receive you, which are a part of his purchaſe, and his redeemed ones. Chriſt underſtands what 'tis to dye, 'tis an unuſual tryal, which you can have experience of but once; unuſual ſtrength ſhall be afforded.

afforded. If death were but lookt upon only as a dark paſſage into the glorious and lightſome inheritance, it would be no longer terrible, but deſireable.

6. let this crown of Life, *make you long for your Lords appearing.* Oh cry unto him to remove time and dayes out of the way, and that the wheels of his chariot may make greater haſt. Long for the time when the heavens ſhall break aſunder, and the faireſt of ten thouſand ſhall ſhew his face through the clouds, and ſit upon his great white throne to judge the world in righteouſneſs. When he comes *his reward will be with him*, Rev. 22. 12. Never a Saint ſhall be ſeen without a crown at that day. And Oh what a ſpectacle will it be to behold the Head, and all the members together! every one having on a rich and ſparkling diadem! The Saints are deſcribed to be ſuch as *love their Lords appearing.* And there is reaſon they ſhould wiſh for it: *For when Chriſt who is their life ſhall appear, then ſhall they alſo appear with him in glory.*

FINIS.